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# THE EMOTIONS OF JESUS

BY

PROFESSOR ROBERT LAW, D.D.
TORONTO

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1915

TO

MY MOTHER

# PREFACE

NOTHING needs to be said by way of preface to this latest addition to the "Short Course Series," except that it does not aim at being a treatise on the emotional life of Jesus, and that even the field indicated by its title is covered only in part. Other attractive and fruitful topics—such as our Lord's delight in nature, the emotions arising out of His more intimate personal relations, His emotion in the presence of death, His shame, and the rich emotional content of the Passion-narrative — readily suggest themselves, but have had to be altogether omitted, or else are touched upon in a merely incidental way. Whether it may be possible to me at some future time to remedy this, I know not. Meantime, this



T.A. STONE
A205

short series of studies is published with the hope that it will be welcome to members of my former congregations and to my many friends, both old and new, as a memento of one who always thinks of them with affection and gratitude, as well as acceptable and profitable to a wider circle of readers.

ROBERT LAW.

TORONTO,
*December* 1914.

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"Jesus is God lived by man."—GODET.

"The face of Jesus is like all men's faces."
RUSSIAN PROVERB.

"We find in Emotion a function so highly beneficial, so indispensable for full vitality, that we confidently include in our ideal of human character a permanent and immeasurable richness of emotional sensibility."—SULLY.

# I

# THE JOY OF JESUS

"'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
'Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?'
'Bravely,' said he, 'for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the living bread.'

O human soul! As long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow
To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil, thou labourest through the night,
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

# I

## THE JOY OF JESUS

"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." —St. John xv. 11.

Jesus is the Man of Sorrows; the title is for ever His, like His Crown of Thorns. It expresses Him truly as the One who has borne the whole immense burden of sinning, suffering humanity. But it does not fully, nor even fundamentally, express Him. Instinctively we would shrink from describing Jesus as an unhappy person, as one who at any moment, or in any circumstance, existed miserably. Instinctively we feel that the ground-tone of His life, latent in its harshest discords, is joy. And as we think of what His mission was, of what He purposed and claimed to effect, we see that it

could not be otherwise. No pessimist could be a saviour. "Such as we have give we unto thee." Unhappiness can never beget happiness, nor sickness health. Only he can "strengthen the wavering line," in whom joy is a force infectious and conquering, ringing in his voice, gleaming in his eyes. So was it that Jesus came. He came with glad tidings, came as the Divine Physician into the world's vast hospital. His words are beatitudes. He lifts up His hands in benediction. The blessings of the Divine Kingdom He was bringing to men He could compare to nothing so much as to the festive joys of marriage (St. Mark ii. 19). Himself and His disciples were like a wedding-party. He was the bridegroom whose joy overflows into the hearts of his friends, and turns fasting into feasting. Even at the last, on the verge of Gethsemane and in sight of Calvary, He speaks not of His sorrows, but still of His joy. He is the Lord of joy, and His crowning desire for His servants is that they may enter into the joy of their Lord and have it fulfilled in them.

Yet Jesus is the Man of Sorrows; and it is because He is the Man of Sorrows that His joy is so precious a legacy, so strong an anchor to our souls. He is no "sky-blue" optimist. This Man of Joy has dwelt in the heart of blackest night. He has seen hell, here on earth, in men's hearts, flaming in their eyes, triumphing in their deeds. Yet His joy is unconquered. No one has ever sounded the depths of reality, has ever penetrated to the ultimate core of life, as Jesus did; and what He finds there is not an abyss of evil, but an infinite of good. I desire then to speak of the joy of Jesus—of His joy rather than of His joys. There are joys which are transfigured sorrows, like the rainbow, which shines in the very substance of the lowering cloud. But the rainbow is the child of the sun. And I want to speak of that unfailing cause of joy which for Jesus transcended all causes of sorrow, which made the sunshine of His life, and which alone can make the sunshine of ours.

## I. The Joy of Trust.

Now all deep, lasting joy must be rooted in faith, in our conviction regarding reality —the eternal reality that lies within and beyond the outward show that passes before our eyes moment by moment. What does life mean? What lies at the heart of it? Stevenson used to say in his half-humorous way that he had a tremendous belief in the "ultimate decency of things." And a biographer, speaking of the *gaiety* of John Wesley, says that it was such as could be seen only in one "who felt his religion to rest upon the whole nature of things, and who was at rest in his religion." And of this joyous faith, this firm confidence in an ultimate rightness and goodness in the whole nature of things, Jesus Christ is for ever the Author and Perfecter. In better words, He had absolute, invincible faith in God; and this was the root of His joy. "This is life eternal," He said, "to know Thee, the only true God." We seldom realize, and never adequately, what a stupendous thing

it is just to believe in God, in a God who is really God, whose presence, thought, and power permeate all existence, whose eternal purpose disposes all events, overrules all wills, shapes all destinies. Such belief, if sincere and vital, must colour all life. God must be its strength and joy, or its terror and despair. And Jesus Christ believed in such a God as no other has believed. To no other has God been a reality at once so universal and so immediately near. He believed in God, not occasionally as we do, but all the time; not in the last resort, but as the first and last and supreme factor in every situation; not in the hours of crisis alone, on the mountain-top, but on the homely plain, in the daily, hourly process of events. God was the light in which He saw, the atmosphere He breathed.

And to Jesus this was joy, perfect and ineffable; because God was to Him not only the Supreme Potentate—the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent; He was all this, but He was the Father, who is Love and has bound Himself to us in our weakness, our

ignorance, and even in our sinfulness, by ties that cannot be broken ; who, because He is what He is, must care, must provide, must pardon, guide, deliver from evil, and carry us safely to the goal of eternal life. To conceive the joy of Jesus, we should have to know the Father as Jesus knew Him, to feel the emotion with which He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said "Father," to have His entrancing vision of the Father's infinite goodness, His adoring vision of His glory, His glowing trust in His work of redeeming love, that responsiveness to all the Father is and wills of which all we can say is that it is to God what perfect sonship is to perfect fatherhood. That joy is reflected in the Gospels exactly as it must have been ordinarily present in His life. He does not pause in His work to speak of His joy. It does not so much appear in bursts of sudden splendour as it is the light that shines in the face of common day and colours all the landscape. Yet what it must have been to hear Jesus say, "Have faith in God," to see His face glow with an inner

joy, and to hear the ring of gladness in His voice, when He spoke of doing the Father's will and finishing His work! Joy in the absolute, all-embracing goodness, wisdom, and sovereign power of the Father, joy in imparting this joy to others—this was the joy of Jesus.

And it cannot be gainsaid that such trust in God is the only basis for joy that can sustain the burden of rational, thinking men. We are dependent beings. Our life is brief, and against the force of circumstances comparatively powerless—in the end wholly so. Only this pin-point of a present on which we stand is ours. To-morrow we cannot see; we know only that every to-morrow is a step nearer to the end of all things of which we seem to be a part. There is a Power, conceive it as we may, which holds us in the hollow of its hand, by which we are carried along "like flakes of foam upon a swollen river." Can we *trust* that Power, or can we not? Get to the centre of things, and there is no question to ask and to answer, if we can, but this—Can we trust,

joyfully trust, that Power? And when men to-day urge strong and plausible reasons why we cannot, and tell us that the world of facts is soulless and conscienceless, a world of blind, relentless forces bearing no trace of Divine origin or purpose; and when we can see for ourselves so much that seems to bear this out, when we face the inexplicable inequalities of life, the long misery and degradation of the world, the gaping wounds of nature and humanity, let us remember that Jesus Christ saw all we see, and more; that for none has this world ever worn so godless a look as for Him who died by the unparalleled iniquity of the Cross, with the hideous taunt in His ears, "He trusted in God that He would deliver Him." He knew the absolute worst, and for a moment even He was almost overwhelmed. The world, with all its mustered forces of evil, was on one side; the solitary faith of the crucified Man on the other; but in that decisive conflict Faith won the day. It was decisive. Though the fight goes on still and will never cease while the world stands, the battle has been won. Jesus

calls men, and not in vain, to repeat His victory.

To this He calls not alone by His example, but by the revelation of God which He has brought, or, to speak more truly, which He is. You and I are not Jesus Christ. There is a sense in which we cannot have His faith, His vision of God. His original, direct, sure gaze into the heart of the Divine Fatherhood. But He not only tells us what He has seen there,—nay, He could not do that; the vision was not given in words and cannot be communicated in words,—He holds Himself up as the living mirror in which we too may gaze upon it. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The character of Jesus is the character of Almighty God, the holiness of Jesus the holiness of God, the wrath of Jesus the wrath of God, the compaasion of Jesus the compassion of God, the Cross of Jesus the revelation of the sorrow and self-sacrificing love with which the sin of man fills the heart of the Eternal.

This is the Christian faith. And is it not a joyous faith? Is it not joy deeper

than all sorrow to know that He who holds the helm of my life, who holds the helm of the great universe, is One whose character is the character of Jesus? This includes everything. Such a God claims from us absolute trust. We cannot trust Him at one point and not trust Him at every other point. We cannot trust Him for ourselves and not for every other being; for to-morrow and not for all eternity. Jesus is the Image of the Invisible God, the Son of His Love. God is what Jesus is. That excludes all fear that ultimate victory can anywhere rest with evil, forbids all acquiescence in imperfection, assures us that every purpose of righteousness and love shall reach its goal. If this faith is ours, our religion is a religion that rests upon the whole nature of things, one in which we can rest; and it ought to fill our lives with joy, much more than it does. Though clouds and darkness may trouble the circumference of life, at the centre is that Eternal Light the radiance of which beheld is joy and strength.

## 2. The Joy of Obedience.

In bringing to men a new conception of God, Jesus revealed also a new obedience, new not in its perfection only, but a new type, free, reasonable, spiritual, springing from community of spirit and purpose, responding to the will of God as a son's to a father's ; and therefore joyful.

Obedience is not in itself a joy. It is not to the drudge, to the slave under the task-master's whip. It was not in the hard, legalized Judaism of our Lord's time. The Pharisees were scrupulous in their obedience ; it might even be said that their delight was in the Law of the Lord. But to them the Law did not represent a really moral ideal to be embraced with all one's heart and soul and strength ; it was not the expression of the character and will of God as intrinsically loving and righteous. God was very much a supreme dictator issuing arbitrary decrees to test the obedience of His subjects ; His Law a statutory requirement, the chief use of which was to enable men to pile up

merit in the eyes of the Divine Potentate. One of the deep joys of Jesus was to be Himself free, and to emancipate others, from this merely external, mechanical, servile relation to the Will of God. He toiled at the Father's work as no Pharisee of the Pharisees ever did. But the idea of merit has no place in the spirit of Jesus; it belongs to a quite other plane. He obeys because He loves the things the Father loves, and hates those the Father hates, and wills all the Father wills, as most holy, wise, and good; and unites Himself in spirit and truth with the Father's purpose. This, Jesus Himself declares, was His joy. Daily, hourly, to respond to every intimation of the Father's will, to take up and finish another portion of the Father's work, to make Himself the channel of the Father's pitying, patient, mighty love to men—this was in life and death His ruling passion, His "meat" that so satisfied and regaled His whole nature as to make Him forget weariness, hunger, and thirst. For this He went to the wilderness, to the crowded city, to the cross and the grave.

It is true that this is a joy which is won only through the birth-pangs of pain. There must be a saying "no" to self, that we may say "yes" to God. And it was so for our Lord Himself. He was tempted in all points like as we are — tempted, really *tempted*, to take the short way and the easy way rather than God's long and toilsome way. Once at least, as we read, there was a "but" between His will and the Father's; once it was not "Thy will and Mine," it was "Not My will, but Thine be done." And that "but" was crimsoned with the blood of Christ's soul. It marks the uttermost triumph over self, the point beyond which self-surrender absolutely cannot go—only so could He exhaust the possibilities of obedience, and His victory become potential victory for every man. Yet even here, not to mark the prevalence of joy would be to misconceive entirely the spirit of Jesus. Could we have heard that "Thy will be done," we should have heard no groan of reluctant submission, no sob of acquiescence wrung from an exhausted will; no, nor any

robustious shout of triumph. It was the low yet glad and loving "yes" which in that last struggle Jesus whispered into the Father's ear, not the nay-saying but the final yea-saying of life, its attainment to the supreme joy in self-surrender to the Divine purpose of life through death.

All the masters of the spiritual life declare with one consent that only in such union with the Will of God is the perfect joy. My revered teacher, Principal Cairns, from his death-bed sent the message to his students: "Tell them that the chief thing is to forget self utterly in the service of the great cause." The secret of life, says another, is "freedom from pride, prejudice, and self; absolute simplicity of truth; resignation to the order of the world and to the Divine Will, and not resignation only, but active co-operation with them, according to our means and strength, in bringing good out of evil and truth out of falsehood. He whose mind is absorbed in these thoughts has already found life eternal. He may be a cripple or blind or deaf. His home may be

a straw-built hovel; but he has learned to see and hear with another sense, and is already living in the house not made with hands." Herein lies the true joy of life. Without this a man may be various things. He may be a drudge, a hewer of wood and drawer of water, an animated tool to be thrown on the scrap-heap when it is broken or blunted. He may be an egotist, who sets himself on a pedestal and wonders why men do not see his greatness: "a selfish, feverish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world does not devote itself to making him happy." But the only way to joy is to rise above self; and the only real way to rise above self is by getting to God, uniting ourselves to the Infinite Good, for which we are made. This is the joy of Jesus; and it is a joy—the one joy—we may all possess. It is a joy which may shine for us in the humblest details of daily duty. You can unite yourself with the Infinite, live the Eternal Life, by doing the most transient task in the spirit of Christ. At one time I knew an old labourer, a member

of my congregation, whose task, year in year out, was to trundle a wheelbarrow. After his death, some of his fellow-workmen told that when at his work he had a habit of talking to himself; and when they listened they would sometimes hear this—"The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." Was it not sublime?—a man thinking of the chief end of man and the glory of God between the shafts of a wheelbarrow. He found the Infinite, found Life Eternal, in his poor daily employment. So may you. Yet none of us is limited to "the trivial round, the common task." We have all a larger part to take in the building up of the Kingdom of God. We are solicited and called in many directions to lay our lives alongside of God's great work in this world, in the work of the Church, in its missionary enterprises at home and abroad, in all that makes for social, civic, political, and industrial progress. We have to create a community without slums for the poor and unnecessary perils for the weak, without conditions that make virtue gratuitously difficult, vice easy

and certain ; a community of truth and holiness and love, a city of God. We have to labour on to bring in the "Christ that is to be." And this is joy—the service of duty in the spirit of love, the service of God and of man in the spirit of Jesus. This is life, this alone satisfies. And of this we may have as much as we please ; it is the only thing of which we may have as much as we please. Be sure that if we are not getting what we want out of life, it is because we do not want the best. The best is unlimited. "These words have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be filled full."

### 3. The Joy of Hope.

The third and completing element in the joy of Jesus was that of Hope. As to Jesus God was that present reality which embraces and transcends all else, and the will of God the Infinite Good, so the one glorious vision the future held for Him was the Kingdom of God. Already He beheld Satan hurled from his throne. God would arise ; righteousness,

peace, and joy would triumph. He foresaw all difficulties, discounted all disappointments; but, despite all obstacles, God's fatherly rule would find its way into men's hearts. Not even in the darkest hour of His and the world's history, when injustice, hypocrisy, and hate were at the height of their power, did He doubt that "clouds would break," or fear that though "right were worsted, wrong would triumph." He Himself was the seed of the Kingdom, that must fall into the ground and die. His life was the price of victory, the ransom for many. For this joy set before Him, He endured the Cross.

And this joy of hope should fill our lives too. We cannot hope too greatly if our hope is based upon God, upon God's character and purpose. Nothing can be too good to be true; the only possibility is that what we think good, and very good, may not be good enough for God. We cannot take too bright a view of the future, our own future, our country's future, the Church's and the world's future, if in the centre of that view we set Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, and enthroned.

Such was the joy of our Master. It may be ours in ever-growing measure ; and it will, if we have but the courage to venture ourselves upon His God and our God, to surrender ourselves loyally to live for God's ends, and still to trust in Him when we cannot see, and hope in Him when all seems doubtful. Lift up your hearts. Go into the New Year[1] without fear. Go not seeking joy, but with a fresh resolve to live for the highest ; and the joy of Jesus will be more and more fulfilled in you. For joy is given never to them that seek joy, but always to them that seek first the Kingdom of God.

[1] This discourse was delivered on the first Sunday of the year.

# II

# THE GENIALITY OF JESUS

"Wherefore did I contrive for thee that ear
Hungry for music, and direct thine eye
To where I hold a seven-stringed instrument,
Unless I meant thee to beseech me play?"

BROWNING.

## II

# THE GENIALITY OF JESUS

"John came neither eating nor drinking . . . The Son of Man came eating and drinking."—St. Matt. xi. 18, 19.

We have seen what was the basal joy of Jesus. The being, the character, the universal presence, activity, and sovereignty of the Father in heaven—these were the everlasting arms underneath all existence, the widest, but also the most immediate environment of His own life and of all life; and within this infinite joy all joys and sorrows that arise from the lesser environments were ensphered. And, to follow the logical order, we ought to consider in the first place the emotions awakened in Jesus by the widest and most external of these, Nature. But leaving this subject for

another occasion, let us endeavour to study the emotions excited by His human environment; and first by those things in it that are naturally gladsome.

It so happens that the contrast between Him and John the Baptist regarding this very matter was one of the things that arrested the attention of their contemporaries. John impressed the popular imagination by his rigid asceticism. His abode, his food and raiment were those of the desert, telling of one by whom the world and its delights, and all the joys of common life, had been forsworn. But Jesus, they said, came "eating and drinking." He was no weird prophet coming forth from the wilderness in hermit's garb, but a homely man, affable, approachable, sociable in His manner of life, kindly with His kind. He had all John's scorching indignation against the evils of society and the hypocrisies of conventional religion, but He had what John had not, *geniality*. There is a type of piety in which we do not expect to find this; as, for example, St. Teresa naively discloses when she writes of

Peter of Alcantara,[1] a saint and ecclesiastic famous in her day, that "with all his sanctity he was kind." She had not expected to find so much genial humanity in so eminently pious a person. And plainly it would have been equally unexpected in John the Baptist; and to those who took their idea of religious intensity from John it was a surprise to find it in Jesus. He comes eating and drinking, looking with lively unaffected sympathy upon the pursuits and joys of common life, and Himself participating in them so far as His unique calling allowed. We may say, indeed, that among the great religious teachers and leaders a marked feature in the uniqueness of Jesus is His geniality. He wept with them that wept; no less did He rejoice with them that rejoiced.

### 1. The Gospel Portrait.

Where upon the whole can be found a fairer, more genial view of our natural

[1] I owe the reference to (I think) one of Professor Glover's writings.

human life than in the Gospels? Take Christ's pictures of family life. How lofty is His valuation of everyday human fatherhood, which, imperfect as it is, seeks for its children the best it knows, and gives the best it can! How He finds His whole Gospel in that single figure — the father whose joy at the recovery of his ungrateful, self-willed boy sweeps utterly away, like an obliterating flood, all resentful feelings and painful memories! How He bids men look first into their own hearts, that they may find God!

And how sympathetic Jesus is with the joys of wedded love! It is indeed startling to find that the scene on which He first "manifested forth His glory" was a rustic wedding; and that His first miracle was wrought to remedy no grave disaster, healed no broken heart nor met any tragic extremity at all, but was an act of simple kindness, done merely to secure that the humble marriage-feast of two villagers should go brightly on with no shadow of poverty or embarrassment falling upon it.

# The Geniality of Jesus

Think of the joy of Jesus in *children*—how He watched the little folk at their play (you cannot imagine John the Baptist doing that) in the open spaces of the market-place, and how He enjoyed the humours of it, with gentle smile marking the changing moods, the very human perversities and little fits of sulks, with which they conducted the affairs of their mimic world, as real to them as the anxious buying and selling of their elders. Or look at that scene, where Jesus lifted the child upon His knees, and fondling it in His arms, sat with it thus in the midst of twelve pretentious self-important men who had been wrangling as to which of them should be greatest in the kingdom of their dreams. Or that other, where a band of fathers and mothers bring their babes to Him for His blessing, and the disciples, as if their Master were some stiff, austere, pompous Rabbi, bid them and their brats begone, and, before they can turn away, His voice is raised in mingled displeasure and tenderness to plead the cause of the little ones and claim them as His own. How the sunshine of

Christ's tender, large-hearted humanity falls upon this lovely scene! How love beams and smiles upon the visage of the Son of Man!

Then, think of the delight of Jesus in *social intercourse.* It was this that excited the comment of contemporaries; and it is still one of the surprises of the Gospels to count how often in the very brief course of His recorded ministry we read of His presence at some kind of festivity, or taking part in the friendly intercourse of a social meal. And no feast was ever graced by His presence but the conversation was all the brighter and the enjoyment all the heartier for it. In His eyes this world of human society was no unhallowed domain; His vision of God blended sweetly and naturally with social fellowship and homely joys.

Everywhere Jesus appears in the Gospels as a close and keenly interested observer of the human scene. Nothing seemed to escape His eyes. The labourers standing around in the market-place waiting for a job, the virgins of the wedding party waiting for

the bridegroom, the pertinacious litigant and the conscienceless judge, the shepherd sending for his neighbour to celebrate with him the recovery of his sheep that was lost, the scapegrace in the far country—think of the multitude of such pictures in the Gospels, pictures that will stand when all the philosophies of the world are dust. And Jesus is not merely an interested, or even a kindly and sympathetic spectator of life's busy and various scene. He takes His place in it, and takes His place in it not with an air of condescending superiority or patient tolerance, but with perfect spontaneity and naturalness; not as one who is brought into accidental contact with it, like a visitor from another world, but as one moving in his proper sphere.

### 2. Its Meaning for Us.

What does this geniality of Jesus mean for us? What does it teach us? First, it rules out *asceticism* as a Christian ideal. It is impossible to say with certainty on what

ground the asceticism of John the Baptist rested; but we do know why Jesus could not be an ascetic. The ascetic ideal may have its origin in despair of the world, as it had in the apocalypticism which was current in our Lord's time. This world was a mere devil's world, an "evil age" which could not be mended, but must be ended to make way for the Kingdom of Heaven. But this pessimistic view was far from being that of Jesus. To Him this world was an imperfect world, on which the powers of evil had a terrible grasp, of which the Evil One might even be said to be the ruler; yet not so that it was not throughout God's world, with God's hand everywhere upon it,[1] God's presence everywhere in it. Jesus could not be an ascetic from despair of the world. Sometimes, again, asceticism is based on despair of man. Man is so weak and evil that the world

[1] However far we may go in asserting fundamental points of agreement between our Lord's outlook on life and that of Apocalyptic, we must not fail to observe the equally fundamental points of difference; and this is one of them.

becomes to him merely an apparatus of temptations with which he is utterly unable to cope. But while no one has spoken so sternly as Jesus of the necessity that may be laid upon us to be content with less than the full natural enjoyment of the world, and for the sake of ultimate salvation accept a life that is temporarily curtailed and maimed, He never holds this up as the ideal. Neither in the life nor the teaching of Jesus is there a trace of the ascetic principle that the physical is the necessary, lifelong foe of the spiritual. The world is God's world; and men are God's children for whom this world is made.

Jesus, because He was the Perfect Man, the Son of God, could not be an ascetic. Nor could He hold up an ascetic ideal to others; for He came to lift up men to His own plane, to give them that loving consciousness of God which makes all things sacred, that purity to which all things are pure, that potency of spiritual life which converts all things to its own uses.

Further, the geniality of Jesus rules out all *cynicism*. It signifies that Jesus saw in

the natural life of human society nothing merely trivial and transient, not a Vanity Fair, a moving picture-show, a tragi-comedy of alternate laughter and tears. Many spectators have seen nothing more; but Jesus saw deeper. He saw in all this changing panorama, this procession of work and play, rejoicing and sorrowing, that passes hour by hour across the stage, something great, something that in its coming and passing away leaves eternal traces on men's souls. Yes, and something that not only means intensely, but means well. He "came eating and drinking," enjoying this human life in all its relationships, because in its nature and purpose it is good.

What then, let us ask, makes this natural life so really great and good that it was worthy even of Christ's living it, and taking a genial delight in it? Let us try to get to the bottom of the matter. Why is it we do not exist as isolated units? Why is our life set in a social framework, so that we have to work and play, eat and drink, sorrow and rejoice, together? What is the meaning,

God's meaning, in all that complexity of physical and social relationship which forms the organism of our life here on earth? It means just this: that God is Love, and that we are God's children made in His Image, and that only in this social state of existence can we live the Divine life of love. That is the meaning of it: our human world, with all its endless ramifications, has only this one great Divine purpose, the increase, the development, and education of love. There never was a more egregious error than that which identifies the "religious" life with a state of solitary devotion. Only think, if we lived like Robinson Crusoe on his island, there would be no place for justice, integrity, or honour, none for trust, loyalty, generosity, patience, forgiveness, self-sacrifice. Almost all the qualities and dispositions that make the moral image of God in man would remain dead or dormant, like seeds frozen in ice or buried in desert sands. Yes, our human world is made for the increase of love. You may say that it has very often lent itself to the increase of selfishness, antagonism, and

hate. That is true, just as one's arterial system may circulate bad blood. But it is made for the circulation of good blood; and even so all the relationships by which we are made members one of another—the ties of kindred, the duties of citizenship, the work of the world, aye and its play too, its more superficial associations — are the natural channels, the veins and arteries through which the Divine life must flow and circulate among men on earth.

And observe that this is exactly how Jesus saw human life. Wherever He looked on it, whether it was at the labourers in the vineyard, or the servants with their talents, or the creditor and his debtors, or the prodigal and his father, He found a parable of the Divine. And the parables of Jesus are parables not of ingenious fancy but of insight. He saw the Divine analogy there, because it is there, because man is the image of God, and the natural human life with all its busy activity among transient things is meant to be filled with the Divine, all meant for the growth and discipline of love, and of all the

graces of character that spring from love as their root.

As we grasp this truth, we see in the next place that, as St. Paul says, there is nothing unclean of itself. There is really no "devil's ground." The earth is the Lord's. Not a single thing in it is the devil's, not a power or appetite of body or mind, no kind of work, no form of healthful pastime. But I am wrong: there is "devil's ground." Wherever love, the Spirit of God, is not, wherever instead of it there is self-seeking, self-indulgence, pride, jealousy or hypocrisy, greed, overreaching, impurity, irreverence, there is "devil's ground." A meeting of Presbytery where any of these are is for the moment devil's ground; a base-ball match without them were angels' ground.

It is strange how in this matter people like to deceive and hoodwink themselves, how even religious people like to palm off deception and humbug upon themselves. It is a saddening thing to any thoughtful man to see how in every age Christian morality tends to become not a thing of spirit and of

truth, but of conventions and shibboleths. Certain places and companies, certain forms of amusement, are laid under taboo by godly people, and originally, perhaps, with good reason—they are associated with so much that is evil. But then the avoidance of these comes to be made a badge of religion and Christian morality. They come to represent the deadly sins ; and a man may neglect the weightier matters, he may have a proud, rancorous heart, may be unjust, censorious, unkind, a tale-bearer and backbiter, slippery in business, untrustworthy in private or public life, yet if he can pronounce the shibboleth aright, he takes himself, and other like-minded persons take him, for a godly man. How is it that there is in human nature this ineradicable tendency to Pharisaism, to put outward things for inward things, unreal things for real, to live by a morality of badges and labels? Because, I suppose, it is the easiest and cheapest kind of morality there is. Unfortunately, it is also the most worthless. It is alien to the mind of Christ. He set it entirely aside. He rejected all the

shibboleths of the good, strict people of His age. He offended their prejudices right and left. He came eating and drinking, with publicans and sinners one day, with a Pharisee the next. He labelled nothing as bad, nothing as good; but told men that all the goodness or badness they found in outward things came from themselves. It was not that which goes into a man, but what comes out of him, from his evil heart, that defiles. He told men to trust in God and seek first His Kingdom and righteousness, to love God and their neighbour everywhere and always, and all would be well with them. He tells us the same thing to-day.

### 3. The Need of Discrimination.

But on the other side also, there is the constant danger of falsehood masquerading under the guise of truth. People may turn from a narrower to what they think the broader view of the Christian life under a profound mistake.[1] They certainly do so

[1] *V.* Stopford Brooke's *Fight of Faith*, p. 28.

when they think that Christ is an easier master to serve than John the Baptist. It is no less possible to make mere shibboleths of the assertions of Christian freedom than of the negations of narrowness. When men say in their hearts—I need deny myself nothing and yet be a good Christian, for Christ came eating and drinking; I may go anywhere I please, for every place is holy ground; I may live in and for my business, and be absorbed in money-making all the time, yet make it all "holiness unto the Lord"; I may devote my life to pleasure and spend all my spare time in the round of amusements and entertainments, for there is nothing wrong in them, and God wishes me to enjoy myself—such a travesty of the geniality of Jesus is only a ghastlier self-deception than the other. Every place is holy, yes, if we take a holy spirit to it; but do we? All business is holy, if we do it in faithfulness to God and love to our fellow-men; but, then, do we? And pleasure too is holy, if it does not degenerate into self-indulgence, but is used for the holy purpose

of refreshing body or mind for the serious duties of life ; but, then, is it so used ? Who cannot see that the geniality of Jesus is a far more exacting ideal than the austerity of John? Far easier to eat locusts and wild honey like John than to eat and drink with Jesus Christ.

What is it to have the geniality of Jesus ? It is to carry on our worldly business, and to give our time and our energies heartily to its duties, but to do them in love, as the work God has appointed us for the service of our generation. It is to enjoy thankfully all that God gives us to enjoy, but to enjoy lovingly and never to let our enjoyment be purchased at the cost, direct or indirect, of pain or harm to others ; never to forget that to stain enjoyment with self-indulgence, idleness, or impurity, is to make it devilish and not divine. It is, above all and in short, to have so much love in us, so much of Christ, that we shall be freed from all external and mechanical demands to give up this or that for our own good or the good of others, because such surrender is the very impulse of love. To this we may not immediately

attain ; to this we need to be helped by the way of self-restriction and self-discipline. And in truth we dare not face Christ's ideal of life at all—nothing else than the austerity of John the Baptist would offer us any hope —were it not that Christ is Christ, our Strength and our Redeemer, who when He sets the ideal before us gives also the inward power it demands, who quickens our nature at its spiritual centre and creates in us a clean heart. Let us seek, then, to be so deeply Christian that we shall be Christian in all things ; and to be so Christian in all things that we shall be more fully Christian at the deep heart of life. Let us seek to make all our relationships and associations of earth, in the home, in business, in the circle of friendship and social intercourse, in work and pastime, in Church and State, the channels of love ; and we shall be of those for whom Christ's prayer prevails : not that they may be taken out of the world, but that they may be kept from the evil, and not only kept from the evil, but be a leaven leavening the world for the Kingdom of God.

# III

# THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

## (FOR THE SUFFERING)

"Christianity raised the feeling of humanity from being a feeble restraining power to be an inspiring passion. The Christian moral reformation may indeed be summed up in this —humanity changed from a restraint to a motive."

*Ecce Homo.*

## III

# THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

## (FOR THE SUFFERING)

"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."
—St. Matt. viii. 17.

If asked to say what most characterizes the moral development of civilized man since the Christian era, we should answer without hesitation that it is the growth of compassion, of that sympathetic sensibility by which we identify ourselves with other selves, *feel* ourselves into other lives, and make their situation and interests, their well-being or ill-being, our own. Despite all that at the present moment seems to give the lie to such a statement, it is true that with ever-widening range the power of fellow-feeling is drawing mankind into one great brotherhood —the rich and the poor, the strong and the

weak, the wronged and the wrong-doer. By it hostile tribes, classes, and nations are gradually won from enmity to friendliness. Every hospital, asylum, and philanthropic institution, every effort by Church and State to protect the helpless, enlighten the ignorant, and raise the fallen is a tribute to the power of compassion. And, however marvellous it be, it is simple fact of history that this enthusiasm of compassion has had its origin mainly in the ministry of Jesus Christ, that the life lived by the Man of Galilee among the obscure folk of that obscure province was the handful of leaven whose contagion has done so much, and will yet do vastly more, to transform the world.

To think of Jesus is to think of compassion. In the Gospels no emotion is so often ascribed to Him, no other is so vividly expressed in His words and deeds. One of His disciples, a few weeks after His death, portrayed His Master in a single matchless phrase, "He went about doing good." This alone was His occupation; this He made His sole business. But we need the

fuller picture of the Gospels to reveal the emotion which was inseparably intertwined with action. A cold-hearted person may be unselfish and may in his dry, unemotional way do a great deal of good; but he finds comparatively little joy in it, and therefore gives comparatively little joy by it. It is fellow-feeling that makes it blessed to give and blessed to receive. And in Jesus the "doing good" was always accompanied by the irrepressible tokens of a compassion which doubled its value. "Jesus, thou art all compassion": this is what men felt regarding Him in the days of His flesh; it was this that caused Him to be sought out by the broken-hearted and heavy-laden, that with mysterious, magnetic power drew to Him, as it draws to Him still, the children of need.

### I. Its Leading Features.

Let us think first of the *range*, the universality, of Christ's compassion. In His earthly life this had its necessary limitations. Jesus was "God lived by man." His

emotions were real human emotions, and as such subject to the laws of human nature. For example, we are always most keenly touched with fellow-feeling for those to whom we are bound by some special affinity or affection. Human compassion is never impartial. The misfortune, even the slight misfortune, of a dear friend stirs us much more powerfully than the greater calamity of one with whom we have no special tie. So it was with Jesus. Twice only is it recorded that He actually wept: once at the grave of Lazarus, His friend; once for His own city, and the fate He saw silently hovering over it. Another condition of vivid emotion is actual proximity. A devastating earthquake in Japan touches our feelings less than a small disaster in our own street. The grief, the pain, the danger we see may awaken a feeling so acute as to be unendurable—we involuntarily avert our eyes from the sight; a far milder emotion is stirred by suffering of which we only hear by report and can realize only by an effort of imagination. And so was it with our Lord. It was at the

sight of the leper's misery that His whole heart was dissolved in compassion; it was when He beheld the doomed city that He wept over it; when "He saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also that came with her weeping," that His tears also overflowed. These tears of Jesus are the outpouring of a Divine compassion, a revelation of the very Heart of God; but *therefore* most human tears, the swift spontaneous outburst of the warmest tenderness of human emotion.

But within the limits imposed by flesh and blood, the compassion of Jesus is universal in its range; within that horizon, it is like the sun shining in the broad vault of heaven. Jew and Samaritan, Roman, Greek, and Phœnician, courtier and peasant, ruler of the synagogue and outcast from the synagogue, dignity and disguise, virtue and vice, the trivial embarrassment of the wedding-feast and the overwhelming sorrow of the new-made grave, the spiritual destitution of the multitude, the hunger, poverty, and sufferings of the physical life —all varieties of human characteristic and

condition cross His path, and His compassion meets them all at their point of need. The compassion of Jesus was potentially—morally—universal. It radiated in all directions, and the extent of its radiation was circumscribed only by the mode of existence which belonged to His life on earth.

But in the words of my text, it is the *depth*, the intensity, of our Lord's compassion that is emphasized. It was a strange and thrilling spectacle that was seen on that Sabbath evening in Capernaum: men and women spent with long sickness carried upon their pallets, gibbering lunatics and demoniacs raving and struggling against the friendly hands that were laid upon them, the maimed, the halt, the blind, all wending their way in the fast-failing light towards Peter's house; the stream of suffering, excited humanity ever growing in volume until, as St. Mark says in his graphic way, "the whole city was gathered together at the door." The patients were there, and the Physician was there, laying His hands upon them, from which a healing virtue flowed

until light came back to languid eyes and the sensations of long-forgotten health flowed through wasted frames, and not one was left unblessed.

But more important even than the description of the scene is the comment which St. Matthew's Gospel makes upon it, quoting from the great Passion-chapter of Isaiah the words: "Himself took our infirmities, and carried our sicknesses." This is, to my mind, the most illuminating thing said in the New Testament regarding the miracle-working of Jesus. We might have thought of it as like the easy profusion with which a millionaire bestows a largesse that really costs him nothing; but here the Gospel guards against so unworthy a conception. It tells us that for every miracle He had to pay—full price—not out of His pocket, nor out of scientific knowledge and skill, but out of His own soul. Those who had eyes to see could read, in the convulsion of His features and the mute sorrow of His eyes, how completely He bowed Himself beneath the burden He lifted from others. It seemed

as if literally He took their infirmities and carried the load of their sickness, as if He must Himself become the sufferer and feel the disease and the distress, must project His own soul into the leper's corruption and the paralytic's deadness, before He could communicate life and health. We should be venturing into depths beyond our fathoming, were we to inquire *how* these miracles were wrought—how, on the one hand, the faith by which Jesus continued always in perfect union with the will of God, and, on the other hand, the perfect sympathy which united Him to suffering humanity, were the channels through which power went forth to heal and save. But let us grasp the fact that so it was. Men not only received actual physical help at His hands, but were conscious of an ineffable compassion which enfolded them and drew them into His inmost heart. Here was One who knew and felt all. "Himself took our infirmities, and carried our sicknesses."

And, finally, we notice that this intense compassion of Jesus was always actively helpful; the sympathetic emotion invariably

bore fruit in self-sacrificing deed. And this was its crowning perfection ; it is in this that the test of character lies. For, like all instinctive emotions, compassion has of itself no moral quality. A wealth of sympathetic sensibility, a tender heart, is no more a guarantee of real goodness than is a delicate ear for music. Good men and bad men may alike possess it, and possess it in a high degree. It may, indeed, only disguise a peculiarly subtle selfishness. For we enjoy feeling simply as such. The popularity of the novel, the drama, of all emotional oratory, literature, and art, the eagerness with which people throng to the scene of any melodramatic happening or follow its details as unfolded in the newspapers, show how we like to have our emotions stirred, and to identify ourselves for the moment with the most poignant experiences of other lives. Thus compassion is apt to terminate in mere barren commiseration, or, worse, in the luxury of self-conscious feeling which we call sentimentalism.

In the complex working of our nature,

emotion has but one purpose, to move the will to action. Good feelings are given us not that we may enjoy feeling them, but that we may do good actions, do with a warm heart what we could not do, or could not so effectually do, with a cold heart. They are the tide which floats the ship over the harbour bar on which otherwise it would be stranded. And in this we see our perfect example in the compassion of Jesus. Always as the needs of men entered into Him by the gateway of feeling, a costly virtue went forth from Him in words of comfort and deeds of power. When hindered from doing what He wished for sinful, suffering humanity, He did what He could. He gave His life, not a fragment but the whole, all its days and years, all its gifts and powers, all He might have used and all He might have won for His own pleasure and glory, —He laid it all down with a compassion that never failed and a stedfastness that never faltered. And when there was nothing else He could do for men than die, in infinite compassion He died.

## 2. An Eternal Truth.

Such, so far as my inadequate words can describe—and what words could be adequate?—was the compassion of Jesus for suffering men in its breadth, its depth, its practical power. What does it mean to us now? What is the value of these miracles of Jesus for us to-day? Did they really happen? is the question many are asking. But there is a prior question, it seems to me —What does it signify whether they happened or not? What is it that makes them more than a charming embroidery upon the Gospel narrative, naive anecdotes that have come down to us from a dim past and from which we may, perhaps, learn some edifying lessons? What light do they bring for the spiritual interpretation of life to-day; how do they enter into its meaning and its hope? Our answer, in the first place, is, that our faith finds in Jesus of Nazareth not a transient phenomenon but the Eternal Reality, and in His miracles a vivid revelation of the compassion and power that watch over us and

rule our lives yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Do I speak to some who feel their need of such a friend and physician as Jesus was, one who can pluck from the heart a rooted sorrow, who can make us feel in all our troubles that God is near, and that underneath are the everlasting arms of His compassion and help? I proclaim to you the Christ of Capernaum as the Christ of this place and hour. He who took men's infirmities and carried their sicknesses then is carrying yours to-day. He beholds you in your trouble as He beheld them, and He is as sorry for you as He was for them.

Think how the tears of a little child would touch Jesus as He passed along the street of Nazareth; they touch Him no less now. Wherever there are men and women in the crowd of this world fighting their solitary battle with temptation and care, alone with their poverty and grief, their burden of weakness and suffering, they are not alone. He is with them, feeling as if with the fibres of their own souls the troubles that beset

them, and how these troubles become temptations to discontent, despondency, and distrust of God. Why should not all confide in this great-hearted Divine Friend? Why do we not all confide in Him more completely than we do?

For still that same compassion is putting the same *power* in operation for our deliverance. Ah! you say a statement like that makes too large a draft upon our powers of belief. The age of miracles is past. No longer does that Presence come to the sick-bed and lay His hands upon the sufferers and raise them up. No! Who then does it? Whom do we praise and thank for it, when it is done? Is health, restored by use of the means His Providence supplies, less His work, than when it flowed immediately from His hands; daily bread less His bounty when it comes to us through the wonted channels of supply, than when He fed the multitude in the wilderness; sight less His gift when a surgeon performs a successful operation for cataract, than when He bestowed it by a touch? Yet there is

a diviner way than this in which the compassion of Christ works for our deliverance. It is true that we no longer look for miracles, if we confine the thought of miracle to the physical side of things. But there is a triumph of spirit over material conditions which is in the highest sense more miraculous, intrinsically more divine, than any physical triumph. That is where I join issue with the Christian Scientists, who make the miracles of Christ, not His Cross, the centre of their gospel. But Christ's miracles were not His mightiest works. You need but ask yourselves, where was the grander manifestation of the power of God—in the brief respite from disease and death granted to the sick folk of Capernaum, or in the sufferings and self-sacrifice of Jesus Himself—in a blind man's receiving his sight, or in the victorious submission which said, "The cup which My Father giveth, shall I not drink it?"—in the resurrection of Lazarus, or in Christ's obedience unto death? Whether is it a diviner work to lift the burden from a man's weak shoulders, or to strengthen his soul to endure,

and win a victory of courage and fortitude otherwise unattainable? Only to ask such a question is to make plain how the compassion of Jesus puts a mightier power in operation than even that of Capernaum. If He does not bestow the good thing He gave to the sick folk of that city—and we know that there are times when He will not—it is because He would bestow that better thing He won for Himself, not to be exempt from suffering but to be made perfect through suffering. These miracles were but flashes of the Divine compassion, breaking the darkness which through a long night of sin and suffering had hid from men the face of God. They were needed. Without them, I cannot conceive how Jesus could in that age have effectively brought His revelation of God to the world. But now the Sun is risen. Far more than any occasional miracle is it to know Jesus Christ, and the Father in Him; to know that He is with us alway, who once "took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses," who still in some most real way has the touch of all we suffer upon the

nerve of His infinite sympathy, and is withheld from making an end of all sorrow and pain only by the nobler purpose, that we may drink of His own cup and be baptized with His own baptism, and overcome, and sit down with Him on His throne.

### 3. An Example to Us.

Then, finally, let us remember that the compassion of Jesus is for our example. It is the plainest of its consequences that the Christian—he in whom Christ lives—must be a more than ordinarily compassionate man. In him compassion will not act merely in a negative way, to restrain from cruel words and deeds, to put a curb upon wrath and greed, and prevent the seeking pleasure or gain at the cost of others; it will be, as in Jesus, a mainspring of life, limited in its action only by opportunity and means. The man who can witness human want or suffering and pass by on the other side may be very religious in some way—but it is not Christ's way; he may understand all

mysteries and all knowledge, may be devout, sincerely and solicitously careful of religious observances and customs—but he is not a Christian.

"Himself took our infirmities, and carried our sicknesses." There was no other way of helping men for Him; there is no other way for us. You cannot effectually help any man unless by taking in some way his burden upon you. You must pay the price; and while for mere pecuniary help the pocket may suffice to pay, and for physical help the body, at the basis of all real help is soul-help, and for it you must pay with your soul.

Remember that sympathy—soul-help—is itself real help. We are tempted to ask sometimes, especially those of us who are of an impatiently practical bent, why burden ourselves emotionally with troubles to which we can bring no tangible, material relief? But men do not live by tangible, material things alone, bread and coal and blankets. If we cannot touch another's burden with the hand of actual help, we may do a greater thing if we touch the man under the burden

with the hand of brotherly sympathy and encouragement. To go down into the Valley of the Shadow with the mourner, to place ourselves beside the struggling and the fallen with a sympathetic understanding of their temptation and appreciation of their struggle—this is verily a ministry of grace. There is nothing more precious to have and to give than a heart tender with the love and compassion it has learned of Jesus Christ.

Sympathy itself is helpful; it is moreover the condition of all effective help. We cannot bless men unless in some way we put ourselves in their place. That is the principle of the Incarnation itself. When God would give His greatest help to man, He had to become man to do it. That is the principle of Christ's ministry on earth. Wherever He went He was seeking to get into closest sympathetic touch with men and women, so that, taking their infirmities and carrying their sicknesses, He might impart to them, whether in body or soul, the contagious strength of His own life. There is no other way. We desire—we all really

do desire—to help the miserable and raise the fallen ; but we are unwilling to pay this price. We want to do it from a distance, by money, by legislation, by institutions and agencies—all most necessary and laudable, no doubt, but all tending to become mechanical and inhuman, all largely futile when they are made a substitute for the living contact of helper and helped, hand to hand and heart to heart. Here lies, in part at least, the cause of the Church's failure with regard to a large and, it is to be feared, increasing section of our population. The Church — the Body Christ now has for making Himself visible, tangible, and effective on earth—is out of personal contact with it. And this personal contact can be achieved—well, only by personal contact. The gulf can be bridged only by making Christ's ministry the law and pattern of our own. He preached to the multitude ; but His compassion also touched the individual. Are not we trusting too exclusively to organization and large collective effort ? Are not too many of us wishful to perform all our

Christian service by proxy, to be tax-payers furnishing the sinews of war but never ourselves serving even as "Territorials"? Is there no one of all the tempted, struggling, poverty-stricken, sin-stricken around you, to whom *you* can show the compassion of Christ, and who might say of you, "He took my infirmities, and carried my sicknesses"? The only justification of the Church's claim to be the Body of Christ is that in it He is still incarnate, that it is to Him eyes to behold, and heart to feel, and hand to succour the sore needs of humanity. You and I are members of that Body. Let us ask ourselves what that involves. Let us ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

# IV

# THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

## (FOR THE SINFUL)

"Man, indeed, is the most noble by creation of all creatures in the visible world; but by sin he has made himself the most ignoble. The beasts, birds, fishes, etc., I blessed their condition, for they had not a sinful nature. By reason of that, I was more loathsome in mine own eyes than a toad, and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. . . . I thought now that every one had a better heart than I had; I could have changed heart with anybody."—JOHN BUNYAN.

## IV

# THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

## (FOR THE SINFUL)

St. Luke xv., xxiii. 34, xiii. 34, xix. 41.

The next subject of our study is the emotions awakened in Jesus by sin, and towards men as sinners. And at the outset it is to be said that the Gospels directly reveal little of what these must have been. There are flashes of emotion, keen and passionate; but these, we feel, are only outbreaks from a hidden fire. The more we think of what sin is and does, and of His unique experience of what it is and does, the more marvellous does the *self-restraint* of Jesus in the face of the sin of the world become. He seldom betrays astonishment at sin; He is never exclamatory, horrified,

hysterical. His emotion in the presence of sin is that of strength, not of weakness. His attitude is never that of mere disgust, because it is always that of practical effort. He spends no emotion or eloquence upon sin in the abstract.[1] It is sinning men and women that draw His very heart, and deed, much more than word, that proclaims the passion of His soul.

In the Gospels we see two emotions in chief, awakened in Jesus toward sinful men. Their conduct excited in various degrees His indignation; their condition as sinners His compassion. We are dealing now with the compassion; and what at once impresses the reader of the Gospels is the extraordinarily compassionate view Jesus takes of human sin and sinners. But we are so familiar with the fact that we do not readily realize how extraordinary it is.

[1] The abstract conception of sin does not occur in the Synoptic Gospels. ἁμαρτία in the singular is found only in Matt. xii. 31, and there in the concrete sense.

# The Compassion of Jesus

## I. The Marvel of It.

To feel the wonder of it, you must think of our Lord's *unparalleled experience* of sin; He lived in the actual world, and knew at first hand its ugliest facts. The pages of the Gospels are written all over with the sins of men. Jesus touches sin on every hand. In the children of passion He sees it trample upon reason, defy conscience, and laugh at laws. In His own chosen disciples He sees it prevailing against loyalty and breaking down resolve. He sees its baneful influence upon religion in the tortuous casuistry by which men seek to serve at the same time God and Mammon, the blind self-righteous pride they feel in the sanctimonious formalism they take for godliness. Above all, He Himself is the exciting cause of sin's worst manifestations, the magnet that draws out all that is worst, as well as all that is best, in men. Ever since Cain slew Abel because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous, it has been the fate of those who choose the higher plane to arouse the enmity of those

who choose the lower. Stung by the inexpugnable sense of the superiority of goodness, wounded self-love turns instinctively to hate, and

"Envy sets the strongest seal upon desert."

In the life of Jesus this saddening experience rose to a climax. This was His lifelong crown of thorns. Think only of the story of His Passion. There is sin's awful masterpiece; there it displays its deepest character. If we ask what sin, human sin, is, human history gives its answer there. Sin is that which repudiated Jesus Christ, hated Him without a cause, spat contempt and mockery upon Him, and, only because it could do nothing more, crucified Him. Those who have felt only sin's velvet glove, and never its iron hand, may judge leniently of it; but is it not extraordinary that He who drank the bottom-dregs of sin's malignity has in His heart the one fount of unfailing compassion for the chief of sinners?

Again, think of the *purity* of Jesus. Men often take a lenient view of sin in others,

because their moral sensibilities are blunted by their own. In youth we are apt to be censorious because we do not know ourselves, in age to be cynically tolerant because we do. Sin "hardens a' within, and petrifies the feeling." It is only as men have kept the purity of their own souls that the greed, the impurity, the inhumanity of men, their estrangement from God and goodness, are felt as a heart-breaking burden. But how can we conceive the emotions stirred by sin in One whose whole nature was the stainless dwelling-place of the Spirit of all purity? We may conceive what it were for a person of fastidious tastes to be associated with a horde of filthy savages, or for a pure-minded youth or maiden to be suddenly immersed in the life of a slum, reeking with all moral disgusts. We may understand the feeling of a pure soul like Henry Drummond, when after hours spent in that Protestant confessional, the inquiry-room, he writes: "Oh! I am sick, sick of the sins of men. When I went home, I had to change my very clothes." But to be acquainted with the sins of men

as only the Sinless One could be, to live in daily contact with it and feel all its loathsomeness as only He could—we vainly try to imagine what this must have been to Jesus Christ. Is it not extraordinary that His soul of glowing purity, aflame with abhorrence of evil, should melt with the compassion that drew the harlot to kiss His feet and made Him known as the Friend of sinners?

And again, the compassion of Jesus is extraordinary because united with a full *condemnation* of sin. Among men we often find condemnation without compassion — the hard legal view which simply identifies the man with his wrongdoing, sees him and sums him up in the light of his sin. To most people (save a mother, a wife, a friend) the thief on the cross was just the *thief*. Jesus saw that, but infinitely more. He saw the criminal, who had lived a selfish and cruel life, the human beast of prey; but He saw too the *man*, in whom still lay untold capacities of higher life.

At the opposite extreme, we often find

compassion without condemnation. Many to-day would see in the thief nothing really criminal, but merely a product of circumstances. Men, no doubt, do wrong and abominable things; but "to understand all is to forgive all." They are the creatures, not the authors, of evil—victims of a bad heredity, bad education and example, bad social conditions. After all due deductions are made, nothing is left that is really *sin*, nothing that a man must lay at his own door, and say "the guilt is mine." And once more, Christ's attitude is not that. To Him sin is sin, and sinners are sinners. The truly extraordinary thing about the compassion of Jesus is that it is not founded on excuses, apologies, or extenuations, but upon the fact of sin itself. He pities and He condemns; yes, He pities because He condemns. His supreme compassion is given to men because they are sinners.

This is contrary to our usual way of thinking. When one is involved in wrong-doing by circumstances for which he is not greatly to blame, we pity him; if he is

entirely to blame, we say that he deserves no pity. But how superficial is such a judgment! The man who is put in the position of a culprit while comparatively free from blame is certainly to be pitied—he suffers a grave misfortune; but how little to be pitied, how small a misfortune is his, compared with the man who is inexcusably guilty, who has done the evil thing, and has done it because he is what he is! It comes to this, that the supreme misery of our human state is that we are sinners. All other misfortunes and miseries are the small dust of the balance compared with this. We may not so judge; but unless we so judge, we cannot even get Christ's point of view. We cannot understand Him at all; His teaching, His life, His death, all are a sealed book to us, till we feel something of the unequalled calamity and misery of sin.

### 2. The Gospel Picture.

Let us now turn for a little to the brightest page in the Gospels, the fifteenth chapter of

St. Luke, and look at His compassion as it is there portrayed by Jesus Himself in that series of exquisite parables, and specially in the phrase which runs through them all, "That which is lost."[1] Thus Jesus describes the actual condition into which men are brought by sin; they have broken bounds and are gone astray. Like the sheep that has wandered from the fold, they have lost their bearings. They know neither where they are nor whither they are going, and are ignorant of the deadly peril in which they stand.

[1] In English the word "lost" is used in a double sense: an article of property which has disappeared is "lost" to its owner, and a person who has gone astray and is ignorant of his whereabouts is also "lost." The same two meanings belong to the various parts of the Greek verb *ἀπόλλυναι*. In St. Luke xv. the idea directly conveyed is deprivation or interruption of actual ownership; but in St. Matthew's version of the Parable of the Lost Sheep *πλανᾶσθαι* is used, bringing out the fact that it is because the sheep has strayed and lost itself that it is lost to the shepherd; and the same Gospel has *τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ*, where *ἀπολωλότα* seems to refer immediately to the "lost" condition of the sheep. In this connection, indeed, the two ideas are inseparable.

In the story of the Lost Son, Jesus depicts this tragedy from human life itself. He sets before us in the raw ignorance, the egotism, and blind self-sufficiency of a vain and selfish lad, the world's great picture of the psychology of sin. The story is an ugly one. The conduct of the wayward youth is wholly unfilial, heartless, presumptuous. He knew that he was behaving badly in leaving his home ; nor did it need the teaching of hunger and misery to inform him that in throwing away his money, his character, his very life, among wine-bibbers and harlots he was sinning against his own soul. And yet he is so pitiably ignorant, so blind to the full reality of what he is committing himself to. Worse still, he is so ignorant of his ignorance. Tell this self-confident youth as he stands on the threshold of the far country, at last free to make his own terms with life, untrammelled by his father's antiquated prejudices, with money in his pocket and the blood of youth coursing in his veins, with all the world before him, a virgin territory tempting the ardent foot of the explorer—tell him that he knows

neither the nature of the thing he would have nor how to obtain it; and, if he listen, it will be with the smile of superiority, with pity for your ignorance, not his own. In quest of reality, he knows not that he is chasing phantoms. "A deceived heart hath turned him aside." He is "lost," he has drifted out upon uncharted seas. How wonderfully compassionate is the view our Lord here takes of human sin, and how profoundly true! What leads men away from God is no diabolical love of evil for evil's sake, but the desire for happiness, for self-expansion, the desire to realize the fullest life. Happiness!—it is the thing we are born to seek, and from the cradle to the grave do seek. And the sins of men are just their efforts, their misguided, infatuated efforts after happiness. This is the innermost meaning of all human sin; this is how

> "the devil spends
> A fire God gave for other ends."

And the deepest compassion of Jesus goes forth to men thus self-deceived and self-betrayed.

Look at another picture from the Gospels. Men are doing the wickedest thing in the long history of human wickedness; and Jesus, the victim of their wicked hate and cruelty, only pities them for doing it, and cries, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."[1] Passing by all they did know and all they were guiltily ignorant of, He pleads for them that they have no real, no adequate conception of what it is they are doing. And that compassion avails for all. Men know, and yet they do not know. They know so well what they do that they are responsible, yet so little do they know that they are not beyond repentance and forgiveness. We may be led by temper, or appetite, or vanity, by fear or faithlessness, to do what we know full well to be wrong; yet we know not what we do. We do not know what sin is. We have very little idea what sin is. "Father, forgive them," He pleads; "they know not what they do." It is because men know not what they do

[1] Regarding the genuineness of this verse, *vide Expositor*, Jan. 1914, p. 92; also *Expositor*, April 1914, pp. 324 ff.

that men are lost, but, being lost, may be found again.

Yet recovery is not the necessary sequel. This word "lost" denotes a condition of *deadly peril*, a condition which therefore excites the deepest compassion of Jesus. The prodigal goes merrily on his way to the far country—will he ever come back? It is only a voyage of discovery he is making; he wants only to see the sights and taste the wine of the far country—but, will he ever come back? God only knows. Meanwhile, he is lost, his feet are on the deadly slope that ends on the brink of the precipice; and he is the gayest of the gay. How it must have wrung the heart of Jesus Christ to see men with the shadow of spiritual death hovering over them, given up wholly to the enjoyments or cares of the trivial moment! It is the shepherd, not the sheep, that is tortured with anxiety about its fate. The unheeding animal contentedly nibbles the grass on the mountain-side, without a thought of the night that is coming down, the storm that is brewing, the rocks and

precipices among which it will be driven, the beasts of prey that will seek its life. But of all this the shepherd thinks—pictures its helplessness, its loneliness, its sure destruction in the midst of these perils, until a great tide of pity carries him away and sends him forth on his painful and hazardous quest. It was thus Jesus saw men in their sins. He must fly to the rescue. The lost would not come to Him ; He must both seek and save. On Him must the burden fall ; His it must be to pay the whole price, the chastisement of our peace. It was this heart-breaking compassion for lost men that inspired the ministry of Jesus Christ, and still inspires it.

And, lastly, this word "lost" tells us that Christ's compassion for sinners is in a sense compassion for Himself—nay, we may go further and say, for that Father-God whose representative He is. The sinner's loss is, first of all and most of all, Christ's loss, God's loss. That, indeed, is directly the theme of these parables. The shepherd's compassion is not merely pity for a sheep,

any man's sheep; it is for his own sheep which he has cared for since it was a little lamb, which has become like a part of himself. The father clasps the penitent scapegrace in his arms as he would not another man's son. "This my son," he says, "my son," dearer to me than my own life, "was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found." It is the climax of all Divine joy, the joy of recovery, of love redeeming and victorious.

And not far from that picture of the Rejoicing Shepherd and Father, we find another — the picture of the Weeping Saviour, of love baffled and defeated. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." The soul of all compassion —compassion defeated but only more poignant from defeat—all grief, the grief of love unprized and trampled upon but only the more tenacious for every rebuff, breathes in that lament of Jesus over Jerusalem. This heart-breaking compassion over the lost that

are not found because they will not, is the climax of all Divine sadness. It contains depths into which I shrink from looking. Must Jesus always bear this cross? This Divine grief—is it irremediable, unending, eternal as the joy of love triumphant? This, only this, let us be sure of, this let us fix in our hearts, that *something* we must be to Christ—to God—we cannot be nothing—something, joy or grief, gain or loss, for which we have no measure except God's own, the uttermost sacrifice of the Cross. This is the innermost meaning of the Gospel of Christ: the love of God is love that *wants* us, not a mere benevolence that pours down its gifts upon us from an infinite altitude, but love that seeks us with patient, unforgetting desire, love that lives in our lives, the love of God that can never be satisfied until it find us in our finding Him.

### 3. The Christian Obligation.

Such was the character of Christ's compassion on lost men, that inspired His

ministry; and His ministry is ours, and for its fulfilment, how we need His compassion! Now, I believe there never was so much compassion in the world as at present. Christ has taught us compassion for the physical ills of life, the weariness, the drudgery, the maladies and sufferings of men. That noble compassion touches us with something like enthusiasm. It inspires legislation, draws munificent gifts from the rich, spreads over the land a network of beneficent agency, has its focus in the Christian Church and its deep source and sustainment in the Spirit of Christ. But, I fear there is not in the Church to-day an equal growth of the deeper compassion of Christ, for the spiritual disabilities of men, for men as lost to themselves and lost to God. We do need a great quickening there, in the conviction that the root of all our human problem is just Sin, in our compassion for those who are wandering in the ignorance of their darkened minds, led astray by temptation, far from the possibility of all really happy

and fruitful life, who need help at the centre, the help and salvation of God in Christ. Does the heart of the Church, your heart and mine, throb like His with a vast pity for those who are scattered abroad as sheep not having a shepherd, who have lost faith in God and righteousness, whose soul's light is quenched or has never been kindled, and who are drifting into even deeper darkness, and, worst of all, who are quite content or, if not, think it is only more money, more success, or more pleasure they need? Do we need to be goaded and whipped up to something like zeal for the Church's missionary enterprises at home and abroad, and for its work of social service? If we had Christ's compassion for men, we would be unable to restrain ourselves in effort and sacrifice. We have the ideas, but ideas are pale ghosts until they are suffused with feeling and are embodied in action; and it is easier to preach the Cross of Christ, or to demand to have it preached, than to bear the burden of Christ's compassion. We are called to take up the ministry of Christ, and

there was one only way by which He could fulfil that ministry. In the fulness of His love He entered into humanity, took the sins and woes of men upon His own soul, became one with them, entered so completely into their lives as to make them His. At a great distance, but in the same path, we are called to follow. We cannot do it without His compassion; and we cannot know that deep compassion of Christ except by first realizing it toward ourselves. God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, and because we were sinners, Christ died for us. May He give us to know and feel something of that Divine wonder, and we shall know and feel this too, that God makes known His love toward us in imparting it to us, and calling us to make it known by word and deed, character and influence, and with all our heart and power enter into His redeeming purpose of bringing back to the fold of His love the sheep for whom the Shepherd died!

# V

# THE ANGER OF JESUS

"The expression, the 'wrath of God,' simply embodies this truth, that the relations of God's love to the world are unsatisfied, unfulfilled. The expression is not merely anthropopathic, it is an appropriate description of the Divine pathos necessarily involved in the conception of a revelation of love restrained, hindered, and stayed through unrighteousness. For this wrath is holy love itself, feeling itself so far hindered, because they whom it would have received into its fellowship have turned away from its blessed influence. This restrained manifestation of love, which in one aspect of it may be designated wrath, in another aspect is called 'grief' in the Holy Spirit of love;—wrath is thus turned into compassion."

MARTENSEN.

# V

## THE ANGER OF JESUS

"And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand."—St. Mark iii. 5.

The anger of Jesus! It seems foreign to His character. One of the hymns of our childhood taught that "no one marked an angry word who ever heard Him speak." And it is one of the surprises of the Gospels to find that He not only could be angry, but on several recorded occasions both displayed anger and acted upon it. It behoves us, therefore, to consider what anger properly is, what function it is intended to fulfil in our moral life, why Jesus Christ as the Perfect Man was capable, and why we as Christians ought to be capable, of anger.

# The Emotions of Jesus

## I. The Natural Emotion.

Anger, to speak broadly, is the combative emotion. While compassion springs from the love by which we identify ourselves with others, anger is naturally aroused by our antagonisms, of whatsoever sort. And as the purpose of compassion is to enable us to do, and to do spontaneously or graciously, kind and self-sacrificing actions which otherwise we might not do, or might do coldly and ineffectively, so the natural use of anger is to enable us to perform actions which inflict pain on others, and which without its stimulus we might be prevented from doing by fear, or by the sympathetic sensibility which makes the infliction of pain on others painful to ourselves; or which, again, we might do only in a half-hearted and unimpressive fashion. Whether anger is in itself a pleasure or a pain we may leave psychologists to debate: it is at any rate a force, an explosive liberation of psychical force, which for the moment raises a man above his normal self. It gives physical courage,

overcoming the paralysing effects of fear, so that with blood boiling and swollen muscles a man in anger will hurl himself furiously upon an antagonist whom in cold blood he scarcely durst encounter. It reinforces moral courage too. It gives outspokenness and telling force to rebukes which otherwise would remain unspoken, or would fall timidly and haltingly from the lips. It wings the orator to lofty heights in the denunciation of wrong, and emboldens the satirist to tear the mask from hypocrisy, to lash the popular vices of society or the venerable follies of superstition. Every movement of righteous reform, every crusade against evil, has throbbing in its heart not only compassion for the victims of social injustice, but a holy anger against the state of things, and against those who stubbornly uphold the state of things, which inflicts the wrong.

But, like all natural emotions, anger is in itself neither good nor bad. It is merely a force, a gunpowder of the soul which, according as it is directed, may blast away the

obstructions of evil, or defend us from temptation as with a wall of fire, or which again may work devastating injury in our own and in other lives. For our imperfect and ill-balanced moral natures the capacity for anger is a peculiarly dangerous possession. And since our self-love, rather than love to God or our neighbour, is apt to be our most sensitive part, anger so generally has the character of mere personal resentment that this in fact is what we commonly understand by the word. Enabling men to inflict pain upon others with a minimum of pain, or with actual pleasure, to themselves, it readily allies itself with the worst dispositions and passions of human nature. It paralyses humane feeling. Under its influence malevolent men become ferocious fiends, and men who are not malevolent say and do what, when the tumult of the soul is past, fills them with regret and shame. It confuses the judgment. Seldom do we see largely or clearly in anger: seldom is it we have not reason to repent of decisions formed or courses of action entered upon under the influence of anger.

## 2. The Gospel Incidents.

And yet Jesus could be angry, and again and again displays anger. Anger flashed out of Him against temptation. Never, I think, was Jesus so hotly angry as at that moment when He heard the voice of carnal unbelief and worldly wisdom speaking to Him through the lips of the chief of His disciples to turn Him aside from the way of the Cross, and when He met the ignoble suggestion with the scathing rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" In many of the parables there is an undertone of wrath; but its full thunder breaks out in His denunciation of the sanctimonious formalism into which Jewish religion had so largely degenerated. If one would know with what passion of invective human language may be charged, how words may be made to play like forked lightnings around the heads of self-satisfied dissemblers and evil-doers, let him read, in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, the "woes" of Jesus against "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." And we not only hear anger

in His words, but see it in His actions. In the Fourth Gospel there is a sequence of events which, whether it is chronologically accurate or not, is singularly suggestive. In one paragraph we see Jesus at the wedding feast ; the next shows Him in the Temple courts. There He is the genial, sympathetic guest, adding brightness to the social gathering by His presence, showing forth His glory in a miracle of simple kindness. Here, with uplifted scourge, with indignation flaming in His eyes and vibrating in His voice, He drives the profane rabble of men and beasts from the precincts of God's house. He who was all friendliness, all benignity, is now all fire, fierce, rigorous, unsparing, consumed and carried away by passionate intolerance of whatever violated the honour of God and the sanctity of His worship.

But most instructive of all is the reminiscence which has been preserved in the Gospel of St. Mark. Already our Lord had come into collision with the Pharisees at several points, but especially with regard to the principle of Sabbath observance. In the

controversy He had clearly marked out their respective positions: His, that the Sabbath was made for man, instituted solely for man's good, and that the interests of the institution, as such, must not be exalted above the end it is designed to serve; theirs, that man is made for the Sabbath, and that human suffering and loss are a lesser evil than any infringement of the rules which guard the sanctity of the institution. It was possibly on the next Sabbath that our Lord and His disciples again went into the synagogue at Capernaum; and there, faithful to their self-appointed task of espionage, were His watchful critics, their expectation whetted by the presence in the congregation of one suffering from a grievous disablement, a man whose right arm was withered and powerless. "And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath day"; nor does He, to disappoint their malice, depart a jot from His intended course. But He takes the first word. He appeals to whatever honesty of mind and humanity of feeling might be in them. He calls the afflicted

man forth into the midst and challenges them to say what ought to be done. "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day," He asks, "or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" Will God's day of freedom for burden-bearing humanity be more truly honoured by making it a day of deliverance to this suffering mortal, or by making it a pretext for prolonging his bondage? To the question so put there could be but one answer. But the Pharisees gave none. They held their peace. They could not answer our Lord's arguments, but they could do what every one can do; they could harden their hearts; they could lock their lips in stubborn silence when candour demanded of them to speak. They could not answer our Lord, did I say? They could, and they did. "They went out straightway and took counsel with the Herodians, how they might destroy Him." That was their answer to all His appeals. All His reasoning with them only made their hearts harder, their hatred more virulent.

And what was the effect produced upon

our Lord by their obduracy? It angered Him. "He looked round about on them with anger." Not one of those sullen countenances escaped the search-light of that gaze, and it was a gaze of indignant wrath.

### 3. A Flame of Holiness.

Such anger, we instinctively feel, is a holy thing, one of the purest, loftiest emotions of which the human spirit is capable, the fiery spark which is struck by wrong-doing out of a soul that loves the right. When a man is destitute of such emotion, when there is nothing in him that flames up at the sight of injustice, cruelty, and oppression, nothing that flashes out indignation against the liar, the hypocrite, the "grafter," the betrayer of sacred trusts, there is much awanting to the strength and completeness of moral manhood. But the anger of Jesus is worthy of closer inspection. It is our duty to try to understand it thoroughly, to trace it, if we can, to its roots, to see what it is in the character of Jesus from which His anger springs, in order

that in the first place we may never draw it down upon ourselves, and then that we may sympathize with it and possess it, that we may clearly know what are its true objects and occasions, and how it is to be used and governed.

And, first of all, let us observe how different the anger of Jesus is from that with which we are most familiar in ourselves and others. We call that anger, which is merely bad temper, an ebullition of irritated wilfulness, an irrational kicking against the obstacles which lie in our way. Jesus never resented circumstances, but trustfully accepted them as the Father's will. We are angry when persons with whom we have to do are incompetent or careless, when they do not show that zeal in our service and regard for our interests which we conceive to be their duty. So was not Jesus. He was never thus angry with His stupid, blundering, disappointing disciples. He took them severely to task ; His displeasure was sometimes hot against them ; but in it there was no tinge of personal annoyance, no desire to retaliate

upon them the pain they inflicted on Him. We are angry when others put a slight upon us. When, perhaps without wishing or intending it, they treat us as persons of little consequence, whose rights and feelings need not be too punctiliously considered, this hurts sorely, and in our own judgment we do well to be angry. But in Jesus this resentment of wounded dignity had no place. His meekness and lowliness of heart was armour of proof against all careless discourtesy and all studied insult. We are yet more angry if any one has sought to blacken our character, or has shown toward us a wanton and causeless malice. All this Jesus suffered; but when men called Him a glutton and a wine-bibber, a Sabbath-breaker, and, deadliest of insults, an ally and legate of Beelzebub, He still met them with unruffled calm and dispassionate appeal to reason. And when, because they could not answer Him otherwise, they drove Him to the Cross with bitter execration and unpitying mockery, His only reply is to interpose between them and the hand of an avenging God the one possible extenua-

tion of their guilt, that word of eternal significance, still heard in heaven and on earth, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." In all the manifestations of His anger, there is no trace of personal resentment. Men might say or do what they would against the Son of Man, and it would be forgiven them. It was when they sinned against the Holy Ghost, the very Spirit of truth and right, that they were in danger of sinning unforgivably. It was only evil, evil as evil, and chiefly hypocritical, self-satisfied and deliberate evil, hardening itself against light and love, that awoke the anger of Jesus.

### 4. The Reflex of Love.

Still we may ask, why should anger be displayed? What is it in the character of Jesus, and in every character like His, from which anger springs? The answer to that question is evident. God is love; Jesus is love; the anger of Jesus and all holy anger is the anger of love. For love is not wholly sympathy and sweetness; love is full of indignation

and wrath. When you see some one maltreating a child, what happens? Your sympathy with the child instantly becomes wrath against his persecutor and rises up in arms against him. You love your own child, you fervently desire his highest good, and what would your love be worth if it did not inspire you with wrath against any one seeking to undermine his purity and teach him the pleasures of sin? Nay, if you truly love your child, is it not just your love that causes you not only to grieve over his faults of character, but compels you to set yourself against them, and to meet them, if persisted in, with the full force of your displeasure? Anger is the emotion produced by antagonism; and love by its very nature is antagonism to everything that works injury to life.

Look at the anger of Jesus. In every case it is the anger of love. His love to God and zeal for God's worship makes Him indignant at whatever dishonours God, and impels him to cleanse the Temple courts of a profane and polluting traffic. He loves men,

and, aflame with wrath against all inhumanity, He speaks the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. And these men in the synagogue, self-hardened against the truth—they were doing Jesus no injury by their stubbornness, they were harming only themselves. Nay, not so. By harming themselves, they were hurting Jesus, wounding His love. Because He so yearned over them and so longed for the victory of truth and sincerity in their souls, therefore as He gazed upon them in their suicidal obduracy, His eye flashed with the instinctive wrath of love. He was angry as one might be angry at a sick man who in sheer perversity refuses the remedy in which lies his only hope.

So we can understand the strange thing which is further said: "He looked round about upon them with anger, *being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.*" Did ever such anger and such sorrow perfectly meet except in the wonderful Christ? Their conduct excites His indignation; and because their conduct excites His indignation, their condition excites His deepest compassion.

He blamed them; His heart was on fire with displeasure against them. Therefore He also pitied them; yes, just because their hearts were so hard, because they were so much to be blamed, were so stubbornly wrong and were so surely sealing their own doom, His soul was wrung with compassion for them. So should pity ever go hand in hand with anger.

And now, what are the practical conclusions for you and me from this study of the anger of Jesus? First, the need to set a watch upon our anger. A man's anger is a manifestation of himself. Pay heed to the character of your anger, to its occasions and incitements, and you will learn much about your real self. Think of the two kinds of anger: the anger of Jesus, which is the anger of love; the anger of the world, which is the anger of selfishness. They are the same, yet as far apart as heaven and hell. They are the same, because anger is always aroused by what hurts and antagonizes us; they are opposite, because what hurts a selfish spirit and what hurts a loving spirit are

different as night and day. How great is our need to be watchful of that slumbering fire in our bosoms, which may flame up in a feeling that is Christlike and Godlike or into a feeling that is worthy only of the devil! We must be on our guard. There is nothing our Master so vehemently forbids and denounces as selfish anger—vindictive anger that makes it a pleasure to retaliate upon those who cause us injury or annoyance. Such resentment Jesus absolutely repudiates. So far as our own feeling is concerned we must be ready always to turn the other cheek. I do not say, that it is not possible to feel a pure and righteous anger against a wrong done to ourselves, just as if it were done to another. But there we have a duty and a prerogative superior even to just resentment, the power and the duty of forgiveness. There we can set ourselves beside Christ on the Cross, and say, "Father, forgive."

But when wrong is done against others, especially against the weak and helpless, then as Christians we are called upon to show the

anger of love, the anger that makes men bold and outspoken in defence of the right. Let it be said again with distinctness that love like that of Jesus Christ is full of anger. "It looks on the rich man, and then it looks on Lazarus rotting at his gate; on the poor, struggling for bread, then on the monopolists who keep food prices artificially high; on the abandoned girl of the streets, then on the man who betrayed her and on the men who seek their pleasure at the cost of her shame. A feeble and negative benignity can observe these wrongs and be unstirred; but a man might better call on the mountains and hills to cover him than stand naked and defenceless against the indignation they excite in the Lamb of God." We need such anger. There is a high sphere for anger in the Christian life. Whatever injures men in body or soul, in the individual or in the community, we are to be its enemy. Christ is the gentle Shepherd of the sheep; but because He is the Good Shepherd He is the relentless foe of the wolves and robbers. And if we forget His hatred of wrong and

anger against it, we become ineffective Christians, incapable of a great indignation, tongue-tied in the presence of corruption, the sugar possibly, but not the salt of the earth.

Yet once more let us fix it in our minds that the anger of Jesus is the anger of love. Because His love is so vast, His anger is so terrible. May He who has left us His example and promised us His Spirit that we may walk in His steps, make us partakers of His whole nature, and fit us for all the work He seeks at our hands!

# VI

# THE WONDER OF JESUS

"The tokens of man's highest nature lie not in his being able to comprehend, but in his ability to feel that there are things which he cannot comprehend, and which he yet feels to be true and real, before which he is compelled to fall down in reverent awe."—JOHN KER.

# VI

## THE WONDER OF JESUS

"When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."—St. Luke vii. 9.

"And He marvelled because of their unbelief."—St. Mark vi. 6.

Wonder is the emotion awakened by any object or event, trivial or sublime, which we do not fully comprehend; and it ranges from the merely transient feeling of surprise at an unexpected occurrence, to the feeling of adoration and religious awe with which we contemplate the being, attributes, and works of God. In its lower forms wonder is a merely transient feeling, due to ignorance or the sense of novelty, as when a child is lost in amazement at a conjurer's tricks, or a

savage at the report of firearms. As soon as the operation is understood or the novelty becomes familiar, wonder ceases. Yet even this rudimentary kind of wonder is of vast importance in human life. It stimulates curiosity, the healthy inquisitiveness of the child, the explorer, the scientist; the eager desire to know the world in which we live, and the nature and causes of the things it contains. Such wonder, as Bacon said, is the seed of knowledge.

Wonder in its higher kinds is the tribute our souls pay to that in which we see something of an ideal greatness, beauty, nobility, or strength,[1] the admiration which rises at its highest to worship. Such wonder is the emotional source of man's loftiest aspirations, the mother and nurse of the highest poetry and art, the highest philosophy and the highest religion. Wonder, admiration, reverence is one of the few things by which the soul really grows. And it is a part of our nature

[1] The opposites of these also call forth wonder. Wickedness has its marvels as well as goodness; unbelief as well as faith.

which is miserably neglected by many of us. We live in a world of petty, commonplace things, because our own thinking is so superficial and our interests so petty. And we seek, vainly seek, escape from this dull and commonplace world by rushing hither and thither after novelties, while we are blind to the beauty and grandeur before our eyes—nature with its glory of sunset and evening star, its miracle of flower and tree, the pictures of heaven and earth; human life with its daily miracles of love and faith and self-sacrifice. The mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire if only we have eyes to see and souls to feel.

### 1. The Astonishment of Jesus.

Though little is directly reported of it in the Gospels, this also belonged to the perfection of our Lord Jesus. No one has ever lived in such a marvellous world as He, to whom "the glory in the grass and splendour in the flower" continually revealed the diviner miracle of a Heavenly Father's

munificent love and care. No one ever felt as He did the wonder of God—the infinite majesty and the infinite tenderness, the infinite purity and infinite forgivingness of God. No one has ever felt as He did the wonder of man, of the human soul with its heights and depths, its heroisms of love and loyalty, virtue and self-sacrifice, its marvels too of baseness and ingratitude—the amazingness of sin.

Yet it was not the virtues or the vices of men that most excited the wonder of Jesus. What He is expressly said to have shown Himself astonished at was their faith and unbelief. When He came to His own and His own received Him not, He was stirred out of His habitual calm. He was not taken by surprise. He recognized that His was the common experience of God's messengers: "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and among his own kin." Still, He marvelled at it. Such blindness, such perversity is really amazing, nor does it become less so by repetition. And when He came to those to whom He was a

stranger, like a Roman centurion or a woman of Canaan, and they showed a penetrating insight into His character, and received Him with prompt welcome and vigorous faith, again He marvelled. It was wonderful that they whose faith had such distances to travel and such obstacles to surmount should unerringly find their way to Him—a thing to think upon with wondering thankfulness.

The instance of faith which specially excited His wonder and admiration was that of a Roman officer, who, when he sought from Jesus the healing of a favourite slave, expressed his conviction that Jesus could bring this about from the spot where He was standing as easily as by His actual presence at the sick-bed. "For I myself," he says, "am a man of subordinate rank, owing obedience to my superiors; and I again have under me soldiers, and when I say to one, Go, he goeth; and to another, Come, he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, he doeth it." And he is sure that Jesus in the region of His activity is vested with an authority no less efficacious and far-reaching.

If at the word of a centurion the well-drilled cohort moved like a piece of perfect mechanism, at the word of Jesus the legions of heaven, the angels of healing, will instantly obey. It was at this Jesus marvelled. He had never before found faith like this, so swift yet so sure, flying like an arrow to the heart of truth. He had not found it in His own disciples; He had not found it in all Israel, not in a single representative of a nation whose history was shot through with religious ideas and hopes. It was reserved for this Gentile, this mere hanger-on to the skirts of the Chosen People, to form this original and daring conception of Christ's power, to see under the humble exterior of the Prophet of Nazareth the great Commander of the invisible powers of the Kingdom of God, and to set on His head the Messiah's crown.

It is evident that the element of unexpectedness entered into this wonder of Jesus. To find such faith in such a quarter was to come upon an Elim in an arid wilderness. The centurion was a pioneer soul, who

followed no man's lead, but made a path in which others should follow. The story of every mission field has to tell of such pioneer souls; everywhere, indeed, they are the makers of history in the Kingdom of God. Yet our Lord's wonder is not merely the wonder of surprise; it is the deeper wonder of admiration. Such faith as the centurion's is wonderful in itself, not merely because of its exceptional circumstances. There is something marvellous in all religious faith. So marvellous is it that to Jesus it once seemed a question worth asking, whether at His coming He should find faith in the earth. We think it wonderful if any man is an infidel, whereas really it is much more marvellous that any man is a believer. Just as we esteem it strange if any one is dumb, or lacks any of his senses, or is an idiot, whereas the true marvel is not dumbness but speech, not idiocy but intelligence; so, I say, the most wonderful thing about the human soul is not its worldliness, its atheism, but is its persistent and unconquerable faith in God and the spiritual world.

## 2. The Wonder of Faith.

Faith! We cannot even express what faith is except in the language of paradox. It is to see Him that is invisible; to look not at the things that are seen, but at things that are not seen. It is to be assured of the reality of what we cannot prove. It is to possess a certainty which we cannot communicate, and which to those who do not share it is quite irrational or, indeed, unintelligible. How wonderful it is,[1] if we only think of it, to see a congregation of people joining in the worship of God; rising in praise and bowing down in prayer—to whom? To a Being they have never seen or heard or felt. There is nothing palpable around them but the sounds and sights of earth. Yet they offer praise and prayer, because they believe that such a Being is present in their midst—the King eternal, immortal, invisible. This, I say, is wonderful. No man from the beginning of the world has ever seen God, has ever heard His

[1] I am indebted to Newman for this illustration.

voice, or touched His hand in its working, or traced His footprints. Men have longed in vain for the vision of God: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! . . . Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot find Him." And yet in so speaking they have but testified their faith. In the same moment that they have said, "He hideth Himself, that I cannot see Him," they have said also, "Whither shall I go from Thy presence, or whither shall I flee from Thy spirit?" Surely, one may marvel at this.

There are so many things, moreover, that are fitted to shake man's faith in God. The world has often a godless look. It does not inevitably appeal to one as a world that a God of infinite benevolence, wisdom, and power has made and presides over. The contention between materialism and a spiritual faith, the question whether there is in the universe that confronts us a conscience corresponding to that within us, whether the world of facts is obedient to a law of right,

or whether might is the only ultimate right —this is a debate which runs through the whole history of human thought, and is tugging at us to-day as hard as ever. And sometimes it does seem as if unbelief has the best of the argument, as if "all things happen alike to all," and life is all a chance lottery rather than the careful plan of a wise and loving Father. Yet men believe. Faith in the Divine order is rooted in the deepest instincts of our souls, and persistently reasserts itself, the stronger for each rebuff.

Then also, there are so many things in *ourselves* that are obstacles to faith. Our natural passions and cravings ally us to the present world and make it hard for us to live above it. The world has so much to offer us that we want, home, business, literature, society, politics, work, recreation, pleasures and pains so various and so potent—it lays upon us so many hands to which we readily respond, that it is difficult to feel that God is the supreme reality, and His service our portion for ever. And when in spite of all

this you believe in God with a lively faith, is not this wonderful? When you resist the temptations of pleasure or gain, and patiently hold to the path of duty and self-denial because you believe in the righteous and faithful God; when you are content amid poverty because God is yours, at rest under the stress of responsibility and care because you believe in a God who is caring for you; when your life is cut from its familiar moorings and you are out upon strange, uncharted waters, and yet have an anchor to your souls because you believe in God; and when you have peace in your soul and an everlasting hope because you believe in a God whose love bears the whole burden of your sin — then, I think, Christ Himself must marvel and rejoice at your faith. For a weak human being in a world like this to have such faith is wonderful. It is a mystery. You cannot explain it. "Can you explain how the flowers turn to the sunlight; the needle to the pole? It is because they are made for it." So our souls are made for God.

If we consider any of the great religious truths which spring as corollaries from belief in God through Jesus Christ, the creative power which made all things, the Providence without which not a sparrow falleth to the ground, Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, it may be said of all that they are *staggering*. While they are merely articles of a traditional creed, they do not disturb our mental equilibrium ; but no one has known the power of any great religious truth until, in one way or another, he has come to feel how ineffably wonderful it is.

Take, for example, faith in the life to come. How strange a faith that is for men, whose days are as grass ; how marvellous that men should cling so tenaciously to that conviction ! Death does seem to be the end of all. Change ending in decay and dissolution is written on the face of everything around us. Man, too, dies and returns to his dust ; graves are heaped up from age to age, and lie silent and undisturbed. These things we know ; these things we see.

The "baffling, sad enigma" is before us day after day; and

> "To our graves we walk
> In the thick footprints of departed men."

And no mortal eye has once seen a ray of light from any land beyond. No one has ever returned to tell us of it. No voice, no whisper has reached as out of that silence. The curtain has never been lifted. Sunset and evening star, and after that—the dark! And yet, marvellously, in the face of all this the human soul has clung to the conviction that the grave is not its goal, and has thrust the daring hand of faith through the screen of mystery, to grasp a larger life beyond. Men have not seen that other world; they cannot by any demonstration prove its existence; still they firmly believe in it, and multitudes live for it and press eagerly toward the mark for the prize. This, I say, is wonderful. I say that there is nothing in man, no gift of genius, no force of will so marvellous as this faith in God and the Life Eternal, which Christ inspires. When

we think what men and women of common clay like ourselves have done and suffered for the sake of a God they have never seen and a heaven beyond the clouds,—how they have patiently suffered the loss of all things, and have mounted the fiery pile with joy, clasping their faith to their hearts, as a king the crown which is his glory, or a miser the gold which is his treasure,—this surely is the most marvellous spectacle earth has to show. We do not half feel the wonderfulness of it. We are conscious chiefly of the flaws and imperfections of our faith. We feel how weak and struggling and ineffective it is. We do not see the glory, nor feel the grandeur of it. But one day we shall. What looks mean and meagre under the grey skies of earth will shine out in its proper splendour in the sunshine of Christ's manifested presence. To have such faith in God, in the eternal life of righteousness and love, is the highest of which the human soul is capable. It is the triumph of the Divine in man. Christ Himself marvels at it.

And there is no question so central to our life as this: Have we this faith? There is the one broad issue for us all—this faith in God and eternity, in Jesus Christ as the Revealer of God and Saviour of men, is true or it is false. We may have our different interpretations of this faith; but, broadly, it is true or it is false. And it makes all the difference there *can* be, whether it is eternal fact, or all dream and delusion. Have we unequivocally settled with ourselves the question: If this faith is true, what does it signify for me? What course ought I to follow? What must I do to be saved, and to save others? Let us meet Christ with a mind as frank and sincere and simple as the centurion's. Christianity may present many difficulties, intellectual and, still more, practical difficulties; but to those who look plainly at plain issues, and give honest answers to honest questions, Christ always says "Follow me"; and in Him, more and more as they follow Him, they find the Way, the Truth, the Life.

### 3. The Marvel of Unbelief.

Let us consider, for a moment, one other astonishment of Jesus. He marvelled joyfully, thankfully, at the centurion's faith. No less did He marvel, sorrowfully, as if it were almost too bad to be true, at the unbelief of the men of Nazareth. Never as yet had He suffered so bitter an experience of blind unreasonableness and moral perversity as now, among the people of His own native town. For they were profoundly impressed by Him. The facility and felicity of His speech, the arresting and powerful thoughts which flowed from His lips in an uninterrupted stream of graceful and eloquent utterance, moved them to astonishment. But it moved what was worst in them. They resented it. His marvellous superiority to themselves was a thing they could neither understand nor tolerate. From whence hath this man these things? they muttered in their chagrin. Is He not one of ourselves? Jesus the village carpenter? By what right has He become a star to shine above us all? So the little

men of Nazareth were offended in the Great Man of Nazareth. They could not account for His originality, His wisdom, His mighty works; but with a really wonderful perversity they made the very reasons for believing on Him, reasons for being offended in Him. Well might Jesus marvel at their unbelief.

There is the same cause, or rather far greater cause, for marvel in the unbelief of men to-day. This inexplicable person, Jesus of Nazareth, is with us still, and is more inexplicable than ever. This Jesus, this poor Jew, this carpenter of Nazareth, has become the Christ, the revolutionizer of men's spiritual life and of the world's history, whose mighty works are in every quarter of the globe, in whom countless millions have found the inspiration of their lives, whom even unbelief shrinks from putting on a level with the noblest and best of men. He is still the unaccountable man, more unaccountable now than He was to the men of Nazareth. And if Jesus marvelled at the unbelief of His compatriots and contemporaries, much more may He marvel at the unbelief of men to-

day. The flimsiness of many of its pretexts; the paltry considerations for which men sometimes say, "I am done with Christianity; no more religion for me!" the blindness of men to the highest and best when it is set before them; yes, and the sheer vanity which sometimes prompts the profession of unbelief, the intellectual pride which scorns the "little children" of faith, and declines to be set on the same level as the humble believer—all this gives a view of human nature which, in a melancholy sense, is marvellous.

But if Christ marvels at the unbelief of unbelievers, still more does He marvel at that of believers. It was so of old. How often He expressed a sad surprise at the unbelief of His own chosen friends and disciples! Where is your faith? How is it ye have so little faith? He says to the disciples in the storm. We do not wonder at their panic. When the deep hurls its billows upon men, making them the playthings of its awful sport, gaping upon them with the jaws of death, we do not wonder at men being seized with that

blind overmastering fear which sweeps away all reason, reverence, and self-control. It is human nature, the last infirmity even of the brave. But Jesus wondered at it in His disciples; He wondered at it, because these men actually had faith. The faith they failed to display was the faith they not only professed but possessed. Where was their faith? the Master asked. They had lost grip of it when they had most need of it, like the raw recruit who in action loses his head, drops his rifle, or in his nervousness forgets to fire it at the critical moment. What is faith for but to make a man something else than a bundle of unstrung nerves in the hour of trial; the conqueror, not the demoralized victim, of circumstances? And if Jesus marvelled at their unbelief, how often has He reason to marvel at ours! We believe in the Christ who *died* for sin; strange that men who so believe should sometimes act as if wrong-doing were of less consequence than some loss of money or deprivation of enjoyment. We believe in a God who cares for us and guides us through all the intricacies and

dangers of this changeful life; strange that we so often succumb to the fret and fever of anxiety and the tremors of fear! We believe that only in the service of God's will can we find true freedom, only in the love of God and our fellow-men true joy and strength; is it not strange that we do not seek to enter more completely into this greater life, that we do not launch out upon the deep, but still hug the shore of lower aims, anxieties, and ambitions? We know that if we firmly believed in and acted upon what we *do believe*, the real things, the eternal things, love, truth, faithfulness, kindness, the life of service, Christ as a living presence with us and in us, all things would be possible to us, and we should be blessed above all that the world can give. We know that if the whole Church fully and firmly believed and felt and acted upon what it does believe, the world would soon be absolutely transformed. Sin and shame would flee away, the Kingdom of God would be here. And we know that, weak as we are, it is in God's power and will to work this in us; and knowing this, and knowing how wonder-

ful and divine a thing is a true and living faith, let us prize and seek it above all else.

There are three great ways God has of increasing our faith, if we will. First, Duty—doing His Will. Nothing makes more real to ourselves all that we believe than promptly to do it; especially when it goes against our own will and inclination. And then, Suffering. It is to enlarge and educate our faith that all our trials and temptations are appointed. And then, in all and through all, Worship, the Word of God, and Prayer, looking in all things unto Jesus, who is both the Author and Perfecter of Faith.

# VII

# STRAITENED!

"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof And I beheld and, lo, . . a Lamb as it had been slain."—REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

## VII

## STRAITENED!

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."—St. Luke ix. 51.

"I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—St. Luke xii. 50.

It is no slight alleviation of the grievous things in human life that they are for the most part unforeseen, or at least are not clearly and circumstantially foreseen. There are places of pain and sorrow through which we know our path must some day lead, but a merciful obscurity veils them from our eyes; and thus the very weakness of our nature becomes in some sort a shelter from its troubles. But when Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem it was with a clear view of what should befall Him there—we may

even say that it was because He had in a sense decided to die. From the beginning the life of Jesus had been a going up to Jerusalem, like a stream which with all its windings is always making for the ocean. At first unconsciously, then more and more consciously as the Father's will unfolded itself to Him, and at last with deliberate intention, He takes the predestined way. The cross, no longer looming vague in the distance, has become a vivid and imminent reality. "Behold," He says to the disciples, "we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him."

The genuineness of these predictions has, as might be expected, been denied by many critics, but is substantially confirmed by the narrative with which they are incorporated, revealing, as it does, by many subtle and uncalculated touches the extraordinary tension

of feeling under which our Lord made that last journey to Jerusalem. We hear it in the Master's words, which are more than usually abrupt, solemn, and peremptory, demanding of men that concentrated, white-hot enthusiasm which regards all secondary interests, however precious, almost as enemies.[1] We see it even in His bodily appearance. As He went down into the Valley of the Shadow there was that in His bearing and in the expression of His countenance that struck awe to the hearts of His followers. The disciples, as St. Mark tells, "were amazed, and as they followed were afraid" (x. 32). St. Luke's phrase is more definitely descriptive. "He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," literally rendered, He "stiffened" His face, hardened it, set His face like a flint[2] to go to Jerusalem. That Face of Jesus, lips clenched, eyes fixed and gleaming, every

[1] *e.g.* Luke ix. 59–62, xiv. 26. Jesus *felt* as never before what the Kingdom of God required of men, because He felt as never before what it required of Himself.

[2] The word is taken from the Greek version of Isa. l. 7.

feature tense with the emotion of resolute, unyielding purpose, is one of the great pictures of the Gospels. It bids us look and marvel, sympathize and imitate.

### I. Strength perfected in Weakness.

It bids us think once more, what it was to which Jesus was setting His face—Jerusalem. Sometimes it is given to God's soldier-saints to lay down their lives at God's feet in a blaze of unpremeditated sacrifice. The call comes, and they are ready. A leap into the dark, and "the black minute's at end," and "sudden the worst turns the best to the brave." Oftener they go forward like St. Paul on the path of duty and danger, not knowing certainly what things shall befall them. How different was the ordeal through which the stedfastness of Jesus had to pass. He had a baptism to be baptized with, and no warm wave of impulse must carry Him through; in no paroxysm of exalted passion must He reach His goal and snatch the crown of victory. Deliberately—knowing,

feeling, choosing all—He must foretaste the cup prepared for Him. Jesus may have seen crucifixions: He knew at least what crucifixion was; what it meant for Himself, for the followers who had placed their trust in Him, for the miserable men who should do the deed, for the nation He loved. And this was the thing He had to confront; into this black shadow He walked, stedfastly setting His face to go to Jerusalem. That Face of Jesus—what a mirror it is of grim resolve, of deadly determination, of a will that is braced to a supreme effort, putting forth all its force in resistance to a mighty antagonism!

This is a side of our Lord's character that is not often made prominent. We think of Him, and delight to think of Him, as the embodiment of all gentle, passive virtues. "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." Yes, but how are we taught here that the submissiveness of Jesus was the yielding, not of weakness but of strength; that all this passive side of His nature was balanced and com-

pleted by His uniting with it, in equal perfection, all those qualities and dispositions that form the heroic type of character—intrepid courage, unwavering resolution, the fortitude which shrinks from no ordeal, bends to no opposition, but braves and overcomes all that stands between it and its purpose? And yet there are to-day critics of Christ who scoff at His meekness as weakness; who tell us that Christianity breeds a servile and effeminate character; who speak of the "pale and bloodless Nazarene," and bid men throw off His yoke, and live a virile, full-blooded life. Surely they have no understanding, and the light that is in them is darkness. We think of a Paul saying, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might finish my course with joy"; of a Luther, when they tell him that he must not go to Leipzig because the Duke will lay hands upon him, replying, "Though it should rain Dukes for three days, yet will I go to Leipzig"; of Livingstone on his last terrible journey, with death knocking at the door, vowing and praying

day by day, "Nothing will make me give up my task. May the good Lord help me to show myself one of His stout-hearted servants"; of the men who yesterday and to-day are doing battle with falsehood and wrong,

> "Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Yet their stedfastness is but a faint reflection of their Master's. When we see Jesus setting His face to go to Jerusalem, striding on to the cross as men march to the consummation of their dearest hopes or struggle upward to the summit of their most cherished ambitions, we feel and know that here courage, fortitude, strength of will have reached the absolute limit of possibility, that such words need an expanded meaning to cover the case. If we would be men indeed, we must learn of Christ.

But if we get a glimpse here of invincible strength, we get a glimpse too of the weakness in which that strength is perfected. That Face of Jesus Christ—what does it tell

us? It tells of victory, but victory at the cost of inward conflict—victory which is first of all victory over self. It tells of *effort*, supreme effort; and effort always means strength, but always it means weakness too. It means strength that is taxed, strength triumphing over weakness and made perfect in weakness. Do we derogate from the perfection of Jesus in so speaking? Nay, we but enhance it. All human virtues depend for their very possibility upon the presence of their natural opposites. Were there no such thing as fear, there could be no moral grandeur in courage; no natural shrinking from pain, then no such virtue as fortitude, which is not insensibility to pain, but triumph over it; no natural tendency to succumb to difficulties, then no such virtue as perseverance. Strength always needs weakness as the background for the display of its loftiest perfection. So, when we see that set face of Jesus Christ, those rigid features, those sternly fixed eyes, how it reveals to us one steeling Himself against Himself, moving on through the

scene of His tribulation, not with the impassive gait and unmoved countenance of a God, but with the effort, the tears, the tremblings, and heart struggles of a man, every step a victory over flesh and blood!

And we ourselves know what human weakness is, what human fears and tremblings are; and from this side of experience we may try to conceive, very faintly to conceive, what our redemption cost our Redeemer—how He had to overcome Himself and fight down every weakness of the flesh; how He stands before us as conqueror in a real conflict; how He yielded Himself up by a most real submission under the awful hand of God, and not only at the last, but at many a step up to that last, endured the cross and despised the shame.

The significance of this exalted example for our own lives is plainly written. There are features in the spirit of Jesus which it is possible to behold and even to admire without immediately desiring them for oneself, such, for example, as His meekness and lowliness of heart; but one does not need to be a

Christian to desire to be strong of will. It is only as men are resolute that they are to be reckoned upon. He who is firm in will moulds the world to himself: in every region of life the chief cause of failure to rise to the height of one's possibilities is the lack of coherent and tenacious purpose; and though firmness of will is in itself neither Christian nor moral, it is indispensable to all moral and all Christian attainment. Unless religion can help us here, can not only direct the energies of the will upon the noblest objects, but in doing so bring to it Divine reinforcements to raise it above the ordinary human level, it offers no sufficing message of hope for mankind.

### 2. The Source of Strength.

Perhaps the first thing we need to take into account is that strength of will is not self-created or self-evoked. I can no more make myself strong by saying, "I will be strong," than I can fill my lungs in a vacuum. The human will cannot set itself

in motion nor keep itself in motion ; it can act at all only in response to some influence acting upon it. The will is moved by the emotions, and our emotions are fed by our thoughts, our visions and ideals. Strong and persistent effort of will is only the active outcome of prolonged and repeated concentration of the mind upon the end we have in view, until we are, as it were, obsessed by it and held in its grasp.

So was it with our Lord Himself. Look at those stedfast forward-gazing eyes of Jesus. What is it they are fixed upon? Before Him is the blinding smoke and dust of battle ; but beyond it all He sees His joy, the crowning awful task accomplished, the eternal victory won. So He Himself interprets for us that Face stedfastly set to go to Jerusalem. "I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished ! " Already He had passed through one baptism. In the waters of Jordan He had once for all responded to the Divine call. Every power of His sinless manhood, and every Divine heightening

of that power, had been devoted to the single aim of bringing Israel to repentance, and preparing a people in whom the Kingdom of God's fatherly will should be realized. And He had failed. Now He saw that He had another baptism to be baptized with. He had come by water, as St. John says; but there was that in the need of men, and there was that in the love of God which not water but blood only could satisfy. His life, with all its fulness of spiritual power, must go down beneath the chill wave of death that it might rise to become the new life of the world. "And how am I straitened," He says, "till it be accomplished!" This Divine necessity has laid its hand upon Him; it holds Him with constraining grasp; He is its prisoner. In days of brooding thought and nights of prayer He has filled His soul with it; and it has kindled in Him a flame of unquenchable resolve. "How am I straitened!" He says. He has no liberty, no power to turn to the right hand or to the left, until it is accomplished. His whole soul is bound up in it, as it were compressed

into a single wedge of purpose, cleaving its way to the moment when He shall say of this awful baptism, "It is finished."

We see in our Lord's own stedfastness the attraction of a supreme, compelling motive. That word "attraction" holds the secret alike of firmness and weakness of will. The Epistle of James, you remember, compares the double-minded, unstable man to the surge of the sea, "driven of the wind and tossed." Yet so unstable a thing as water is rendered stable by the power of attraction. There is nothing unstable about the tide; no clock made by man was ever so punctual in its movements; for the tide follows the moon, and the unstable element appropriates the stability of the heavenly body it obeys. So is it with ourselves. My strength of will is no independent strength; it is a derived strength, the strength of the attraction that draws me. It is ours to choose between the attractions, good and bad, primary and secondary, which our vision of life reveals, and to confirm our choice by keeping the vision fresh before us.

But always strength and pertinacity of purpose are in proportion to the power with which some object, be it truth or illusion, has laid hold upon us. If you would will strongly, think deeply, see clearly, keep looking straight onward. Where your gaze penetrates, your face will be stedfastly set to go.

But as we look at that Face, we see a second element in the stedfastness of Jesus. If He fixes His eyes upon the victory lying beyond, this does not blind Him to the battle lying in front. Nothing in this last period of our Lord's ministry is more remarkable than the deliberate persistence with which He dwells upon the horrors through which He has to go. We might have thought that He would spare Himself such anticipations—some might account it wisdom to do so; but He who was always so urgent on others to count the cost Himself felt the need. He gazes unshrinkingly into the tremendous cloud which must soon envelop Him. He thinks of the cross, talks of it, gazes upon the face of His agony until it

becomes familiar. Thus He arms Him for the fight; for obstacles only strengthen His resolution, and the stedfast Face is set only the more stedfastly to go to Jerusalem.[1] Let us take a lesson from the Master. A principal cause of that infirmity of purpose which more or less we all confess to, is that we do not adequately reckon with the difficulties to be overcome. We see some object, some amendment of our own life, as greatly to be desired; and straightway we resolve upon it. Cheerfully we promise it to ourselves, and feel as if it were already as good as done. We do not lay our account with the desperate difficulty of really lifting our life out of any deep rut it has worn for itself, the stubborn opposition which the world of facts offers to any attempt to make the ideal real. And so time after time we fail. Our ship is too lightly ballasted, too weakly engined for the voyage, and when the storm descends it is driven out of its course, or is overturned and sunk. A re-

[1] This thought is admirably expanded by Phillips Brooks.

solve lightly made is always a resolve easily broken.

If there is a threatening obstacle in your way, a heavy task, a bitter struggle, a cross grievous to be borne, learn from the Master to look it full in the face. Do not bandage your eyes. That is in every way fatal. Not only does the trial when it comes find you unprepared, with "unlit lamp and ungirt loin"; you lose the stimulus which opposition gives. Look once more on that resolute Face. What does it tell us but this: that the most heroic energies of the will are aroused only by antagonism, that courage thrives on difficulties, that for the true soul deterrents are incitements, enemies are helpers, the task grappled with brings the power, and hindrances pave the way to victory.

And yet I have not mentioned the sovereign element in the stedfastness of Jesus, and in all stedfastness like His—the power of God. I have said that the stedfastness of the will is that of the object which attracts it. I have compared it to the influence of the moon upon the tide. Upon the tide, yes!

But it is the attraction of the *sun* that keeps the whole earth in its orbit. There is a moon which draws in its train the tide of your life—your profession, your fortune, your home, your political interests, your philanthropic or religious work. But like the moon, all such objects wax and wane, and they attract and give firmness only to a portion of your life. It is the Sun we need. God who alone is the eternal, unchangeable reality, God who is the moral Omnipotent, from whom our souls can derive sovereign strength. What is it that finally we see in that Face set to go to Jerusalem? Power, yes, the power that alone is absolute and invincible, the power of God, the strength of the Eternal Spirit, the omnipotence of love and truth and righteousness. No other power can explain that journey to Jerusalem. We know the vast power of sin and the world over men. Everywhere we see its deadly work. But no sinner ever went deliberately to crucifixion for the sake of his indulgence; no hater for the sake of his hatred; no slave of avarice for the sake of

his gain ; no ambitious man for his kingdom. But in the power of His Divine love for sinful men, in the assurance that thus He would open to them new fountains of life, Jesus stedfastly set His face even to the cross, once for all showing how our humanity can be filled with the moral omnipotence of the Divine. And millions, looking upon the face of the Captain of their salvation, have in their weakness laid hold upon His strength. Those who have followed the Christ, who have lived to do the will of God, who have seen the work given them to do or cross to bear, and, trusting in their Leader, have set their face to go to their Jerusalem, have never failed.

There is the strength that endures and conquers all—"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." If at the last you would be found, though with many a stumble and many a fall, in the way everlasting, your faces set heavenward, seek the Lord Jesus and His strength.

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